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Plenary

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Abbreviations used in this record

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
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
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
CANDU reactor	Canada deuterium–uranium reactor
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
EPREV	Emergency Preparedness Review
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
G-77	Group of Seventy-Seven
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
HANEA	Niger High Authority for Atomic Energy
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LEU	low enriched uranium
MW	megawatt

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	research and development
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SLA	State-level safeguards approach
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
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

— Opening of the session

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared the 63rd regular session of the General Conference open.

2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, she invited the delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation and to the memory of the late Director General, Yukiya Amano.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, welcoming the participation of many ministers and senior officials from Member States, said that their presence enhanced the standing of the Agency as the foremost forum for international cooperation in the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy.

4. It was her sad duty to inform the General Conference of the recent sudden death of Ms Bavelile Hlongwa, Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy of South Africa, who had been due to attend the session. She offered her sincere condolences to Ms Hlongwa's family and to the Government of South Africa.

5. It had been a difficult year for the Agency, which was mourning the loss of its late Director General, Yukiya Amano. A great leader, dedicated civil servant and staunch advocate of the Agency's 'Atoms for Peace and Development' mandate, Mr Amano had made an immeasurable contribution to global socioeconomic advancement for the benefit of all. Echoing the many messages of condolence expressed by countries around the world, she conveyed her sincere sympathy to the Government and people of Japan.

6. Despite the challenges faced, the Agency had completed another successful year of work. It had held a number of important events, offering valuable input and new perspectives on how to improve the delivery of its services. The IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges, held in November 2018, had provided an opportunity for high-level discussion among Member States, whose strong political commitment to using nuclear energy for development purposes, notably through the TC programme, was reflected in the resulting Ministerial Declaration. In addition, the inauguration and modernization of the Seibersdorf laboratories under the ReNuAL project had greatly enhanced the Agency's ability to deliver high-quality technical assistance to Member States, thereby contributing to achieving the SDGs and furthering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. Of the issues and threats facing humanity, climate change was undoubtedly one of the most pressing. A recent IPCC report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels pointed to the potential role of nuclear power as a proven solution to the challenges of the transition to sustainable energy. Securing access to affordable, reliable energy was essential in eradicating poverty, promoting energy independence and fostering socioeconomic growth, and the Agency had an important role to play in promoting the benefits of nuclear power by advising Member States on the development of safe, secure and safeguarded nuclear technology. The forthcoming International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power would provide a platform for objective discussion of all aspects of the role of nuclear power in combating climate change.

8. The use of nuclear energy must always be accompanied by the vigorous application of the highest possible standards of safety and security. In that regard, the Agency's efforts to ensure high levels of nuclear safety contributed significantly to strengthening the global nuclear safety framework. The Agency also had a central role to play in strengthening the global nuclear security framework and coordinating international activities in that area. With the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts and the Eighth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety scheduled for 2020, States would have an opportunity to review nuclear safety and security and identify areas requiring attention. Ensuring the safe and secure use of nuclear energy should be a continuous process with the common aim of protecting people and the environment.

9. Nuclear safeguards work was crucial to international peace and security, and the Agency's verification activities therefore required the full support of Member States. In that connection, the Agency had demonstrated professionalism and impartiality in verifying and monitoring the Islamic Republic of Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, despite the considerable challenges faced. The Agency had also taken a commendable approach to the DPRK issue, standing ready to resume its verification activities there once a political agreement was reached.

10. With the support of the Eastern Europe Group, she had been honoured to serve as President of the 62nd session of the General Conference and thanked the Vice-Presidents of the Conference and the outgoing Chair of the Committee of the Whole, along with the Secretariat, for their assistance and support. She hoped that the spirit of Vienna would continue to prevail during the 63rd session.

1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee

11. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.

12. Mr RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, proposed Ms Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico).

13. Ms Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) was elected President by acclamation.

14. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Ms Buenrostro Massieu on her election and wished her every success in her task.

Ms Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) took the Chair.

15. The PRESIDENT, expressing appreciation for the trust placed in her, said that she was committed to bringing the session to a successful conclusion with a view to ensuring the effective functioning of the Agency, promoting the development and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology to help achieve the SDGs, supporting the safe use of nuclear energy and applications, and bolstering compliance with the Agency's mandate to contribute to international peace and security through a solid and properly funded safeguards system.

16. She commended the work of the recent IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology. As an important area of the Agency's work nuclear science and technology should continue to receive the attention it deserved. Significant progress had been made in recent years through the peaceful use of nuclear applications, in the areas of clean energy, health care, pest control, agriculture and nutrition, the environment, climate change and water resources management.

17. She hoped that the decisions of the General Conference would result in the strengthening of the Agency's TC programme. Particular attention should be paid to PACT, one of the late Director General's greatest legacies. In that regard, it was important to use the Agency's capacities and to work in close collaboration with WHO and other relevant partners.

18. The Agency had a vital role to play in ensuring that nuclear applications were used in a responsible and safe manner, with due respect for human health and the environment. The nuclear sector should therefore do more to communicate the benefits of such applications and the efforts it was making to reduce the associated risks. Meanwhile, decision makers should make a stronger commitment to transparency, to ensure that public opinion was reliably informed on the basis of scientific evidence. The forthcoming International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power would allow the Agency to highlight the contribution it could make to tackling climate change, one of the most serious challenges facing the planet.

19. The work of the General Conference should exemplify the merits of engaging in multilateralism and international cooperation to tackle global issues, in accordance with the mandate and capacities of the Agency. It was a matter of serious concern that the fundamental standards developed by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War were being called into question. The optimism generated at the end of the Cold War had proven to be short lived and international relations were becoming increasingly tense, with worrying growth in expenditure on lethal armaments and the abandonment of agreements that had been painstakingly negotiated to promote peace and a nuclear-weapon-free world.

20. She hoped that the work of the General Conference would contribute to building a better and safer world. Her country was committed to nuclear disarmament and would continue to promote the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons in conformity with the principles of irreversibility, verification and transparency. Furthermore, it would work to strengthen and complement the regime established by the Tlatelolco Treaty. Compliance with the obligations set out in the NPT was vital. Mexico would continue to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which was a sovereign right of Member States and provided considerable opportunities.

21. Pursuant to Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure, the Conference had to elect eight Vice-Presidents, a Chair of the Committee of the Whole and five additional members of the General Committee, which, together with the President as Chair, would constitute a General Committee with the requisite 15 members. However, since the Chair of the Committee of the Whole was from the Far East Group, which customarily had one representative on the General Committee, it was necessary, pursuant to Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure, to suspend Rules 34 and 40 in order to have seven Vice-Presidents and six additional members in a Committee of 15.

22. As the Eastern Europe Group had not yet reached agreement on its candidates to serve on the General Committee, she suggested proceeding with the election of the candidates whose names were already known and deferring the election of the other members of the Committee until the regional group in question had completed its consultations. She therefore proposed that the delegates of Costa Rica, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands and United States of America be elected as Vice-Presidents and Ms Rayos Natividad of the Philippines as Chair of the Committee of the Whole; and that the delegates of Angola, Denmark, Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

23. The President's proposals were accepted.

24. As the General Committee had not yet been fully constituted, it would be some time before the Conference was able to adopt its agenda for the session. She therefore proposed that the General Conference, pursuant to Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure, waive Rule 42 until the General Committee

had met and had submitted its report on the agenda, so that the General Conference could consider items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the provisional agenda, contained in document GC(63)/1 and Add.1 to 3, and start the general debate, and the Committee of the Whole could begin its discussions. Failure to proceed in such a way would considerably delay the start of the general debate and the work of the Committee of the Whole.

25. The President's proposal was accepted.

2. Tribute to the late Director General Yukiya Amano (GC(63)/1/Add.3; GC(63)/21)

26. Mr TAKEMOTO (Japan), expressing appreciation to Member States for supporting the spirit of the draft resolution contained in document GC(63)/21, which had been recommended by the Board for adoption by the General Conference, said that the draft resolution paid tribute to the late Director General's many accomplishments and included a proposal to rename the Agency's Flexible Modular Laboratory 'The Yukiya Amano Laboratories'. He hoped that Mr Amano's achievements would inspire future generations and that his legacy would promote international peace and stability. Japan would continue to support the Agency's efforts to fulfil the late Director General's vision of Atoms for Peace and Development.

27. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(63)/21.

28. It was so decided.

29. The PRESIDENT paid tribute to the late Director General for the outstanding leadership he had provided to the Agency and for his contribution to the cause enshrined in the Agency's motto.

3. Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

30. Mr FEDOTOV (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna) offered his condolences to the Agency on the death of its Director General, who had been a dedicated diplomat and valued colleague and would be remembered with great fondness and respect, and read out the following message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

"I am pleased to greet this General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Allow me to pay tribute to the late Director General, Mr Yukiya Amano. His commitment and expertise over the past ten years steered the Agency to many achievements. He will be greatly missed. I also thank Acting Director General Cornel Feruță for assuming the temporary leadership of the Agency and continuing its important work.

"Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This landmark treaty remains the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has played a crucial role in verifying its implementation. Safeguards verified by the Agency are essential to ensure that nuclear power is used exclusively for peaceful purposes. I urge States Parties to use the upcoming

Review Conference to recommit to the three pillars of the Treaty: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

“I welcome the Agency’s continued efforts to verify Iran’s commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. However, rising tensions over the Iranian nuclear issue are increasingly worrying. Sustained dialogue is essential to ensure peace and stability in the region.

“I also note the Agency’s contributions to addressing the climate emergency. Winning this race will require unprecedented efforts from all sectors of society. I look forward to hearing the results of the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power, which will be held in October.

“I wish you a successful meeting.”

4. Statement by the Acting Director General

31. The ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL welcomed participants to the 63rd session of the General Conference. He extended sincere condolences to the family of Ms Bavelile Hlongwa and to the Government and people of South Africa. He said that the Agency was mourning the loss of its late Director General, whose outstanding legacy was reflected in the Agency’s motto Atoms for Peace and Development and the welcome renaming of the Flexible Modular Laboratory The Yukiya Amano Laboratories, in acknowledgement of the key role that Mr Amano had played in modernizing the Agency’s nuclear applications laboratories. While the Agency had faced significant challenges in recent months, it had also demonstrated strength and resilience in continuing to fulfil its responsibilities, thanks to the steadfast support of its Member States and the dedication of its staff.

32. The Agency’s motto encapsulated the unique dual role it played in contributing to international peace and security by verifying that nuclear material remained in peaceful uses and helping to improve well-being and prosperity around the world through the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The Agency offered an unparalleled range of services and was contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. Among many other things, it helped countries on all continents to generate electricity, increase their food production, manage their water supplies, combat deadly infectious diseases and treat cancer. Meanwhile, its safeguards inspectors worked tirelessly to verify that nuclear material was not diverted from peaceful activities. The Agency also served as a global platform for cooperation in safety and security, helping countries to keep nuclear and radioactive material and technologies safe and out of the hands of terrorists and other criminals.

33. For more than six decades, the Agency had been winning the trust of Member States through its technical expertise, impartiality and independence. Despite recent budgetary pressures, it had continued to deliver high-quality services and had seen increasing demand for those services from Member States and a steady growth in its membership. As the Agency looked to the future, it would focus on delivering tangible results that made a real difference to people around the world.

34. The number of facilities and quantity of nuclear material under Agency safeguards continued to grow. Safeguards agreements were in force for 183 States, while 134 States had brought additional protocols into force. A further two countries would sign additional protocols during the session.

35. The Agency continued to verify and monitor the Islamic Republic of Iran’s implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. Having recently held discussions with senior officials in Tehran, he would continue to emphasize the importance of full and timely cooperation by Iran in the

implementation of its safeguards agreement and additional protocol. The Agency continued to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its safeguards agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran were continuing.

36. More than ten years had passed since Agency inspectors had been asked to leave the DPRK. Nevertheless, the Agency continued to monitor the DPRK's nuclear programme, including through the use of satellite imagery. The DPRK's nuclear activities remained a cause for serious concern. The continuation of its nuclear programme was a clear violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and was deeply regrettable. The Agency remained ready to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme, should a political agreement be reached among the countries concerned. He called on the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations under Security Council resolutions, to cooperate with the Agency, and to resolve all outstanding issues.

37. Participation in the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, held in November 2018, had exceeded expectations, and the resulting Ministerial Declaration had recognized the importance of science and technology for development. The TC programme was the Agency's key mechanism for helping Member States to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. Over the previous year, the main focus of TC spending had been on health and nutrition, nuclear safety, and food and agriculture. TC funding should be maintained at a level that enabled the Agency to meet the growing demand for its services, and he counted on the support of all Member States in that regard. Recent assistance provided under the TC programme included an emergency mission to Bangladesh, in cooperation with WHO, to assess the feasibility of using the SIT to control the country's worst outbreak of dengue fever since 2000.

38. The 2019 Scientific Forum would highlight the Agency's work in the important area of cancer control over the past decade. In cooperation with WHO, the Agency had developed a road map for designing national cancer control programmes, which set milestones for countries in the areas of nuclear medicine, diagnostic imaging and radiotherapy. The document would be launched at the Forum and should serve as an indispensable tool for Member States.

39. The new linear accelerator facility in Seibersdorf, established under the ReNuAL project, would provide expanded dosimetry calibration services to Member States. The Insect Pest Control Laboratory had recently been handed over by the contractor and a phased transition to operation had begun. The new building for the Flexible Modular Laboratory, renamed The Yukiya Amano Laboratories, would be ready for use in April 2020. Given the importance of involving young people in the Agency's work to promote the benefits of nuclear science and technology, initiatives were in place, in collaboration with bodies such as the International Youth Nuclear Congress, to encourage them to consider careers in the nuclear field.

40. The Agency's latest annual projections showed that, despite the declining trend in installed capacity up to 2050, nuclear power would continue to play a key role in the world's low-carbon energy mix. The transition to clean energy would be the subject of the forthcoming International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power, which would provide a platform for objective discussion of the scientific case for making more use of nuclear power to help combat climate change. The Agency was in the final stages of making its LEU Bank in Kazakhstan operational and expected the first consignment of LEU to be delivered to the storage facility within weeks.

41. Nuclear technology would be able to offer sustainable benefits only if it was used safely and securely. In that regard, the Agency's safety standards had recently been reviewed with a view to making them more robust and easier to use. In addition, Member States made extensive use of the Agency's peer review and advisory services in order to continuously enhance nuclear safety and security. Those services were assessed regularly to ensure that they met the needs of Member States. The next

International Conference on Nuclear Security, to be held in February 2020, was expected to consolidate the Agency's achievements in nuclear security over the previous decade and help to shape its approach for the coming years, and all Member States were encouraged to participate at ministerial level.

42. Given that increasing the number of women on the Agency's staff, in particular at senior levels, remained a priority, he welcomed the fact that the proportion of women in the Professional and higher categories had exceeded 30% for the first time. Lastly, expressing gratitude to Austria for its support as host country, as well as to all Member States and the staff of the Agency, he pledged to continue doing his utmost as Acting Director General to justify the confidence placed in him by the Board.

6. Contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2020 (GC(63)/19)

43. The PRESIDENT, recalling that on 11 June 2019 the Board of Governors had recommended a figure of €88 061 000 as the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF for 2020, drew attention to the table in document GC(63)/19 showing the contribution that each Member State would need to make in order to meet its share of that target.

44. Since the early pledging and payment of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's TC activities, all delegations in a position to do so were urged to notify the Secretariat during the Conference's current session of the contributions that their governments would be making for 2020. She was pleased to note that 20 Member States had already made their pledges to the TCF for 2020, the largest number of Member States to pledge before the opening of a General Conference session.

45. At the end of the session she would give an update of the contributions pledged and hoped to be able to report favourably on the percentage of the 2020 target figure already pledged.

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2018 (GC(63)/5 and additional information)

46. Mr SALEHI (Islamic Republic of Iran), praising the prudent leadership of the late Director General, Mr Amano, said that, at a critical moment for multilateralism, the 63rd session of the General Conference offered an opportunity to explore the challenges it posed and the roles of different parties in tackling them.

47. The JCPOA was broadly agreed to be a milestone in the history of multilateralism. In exchange for the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran had accepted some provisional limitations on its nuclear programme and provided the Agency with an unprecedented level of monitoring and access as part of its new commitments under its additional protocol and the JCPOA. Iran had only 3% of the world's nuclear facilities, yet had seen almost 20% of all Agency inspections. Iran had always been clear that the acquisition, production, stockpiling and use of WMDs was neither legitimate according to the country's religious principles nor envisaged in its defence doctrine.

48. Despite intensive verification and Iran's transparency and principled stance on nuclear weapons, the US Administration had labelled the JCPOA as the worst deal in its history. Paradoxically, the USA

had developed WMDs of all categories, including nuclear weapons that had been used against others, and threatened, in its Nuclear Posture Review, to use such weapons against specific countries.

49. The JCPOA had been praised as an outstanding achievement of years of diplomatic effort, yet States had merely expressed regret at the USA's violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The JCPOA had resulted in inhumane and illegal sanctions against Iran's trade, economy and foreign investments, in clear contradiction of the provisions of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015) and affecting areas such as food, medicine, radiopharmaceutical products, and even the Iran Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

50. As a multilateral deal, the JCPOA included rights and responsibilities for all parties; it was neither a legitimate expectation nor a practical possibility for one party alone to implement it. Iran had cooperated extensively with the Agency, going beyond the standard CSA obligations, and had abided fully by its commitments under the JCPOA without reaping the benefits. Nevertheless, following the unilateral withdrawal of the USA from the JCPOA, Iran had waited patiently for more than a year to allow the remaining parties to fulfil their commitments, including compensation for the effects of the withdrawal. Despite the good offices of several governments seeking to salvage the JCPOA, the deal's basic objectives and Iran's legitimate demands were far from being met. Consequently, the country had been forced to use the relevant provisions of the JCPOA and partially suspend its commitments in order to provide a new window for diplomacy. Iran would resume its commitments if the remaining parties implemented the JCPOA fully and effectively.

51. The international community had a common responsibility to preserve the JCPOA; failure to do so would undermine multilateralism and peaceful conflict resolution. The USA's violation of resolution 2231 (2015), unilateral imposition of unlawful sanctions and extraterritorial application of domestic law endangered international peace and security. Individual and collective efforts should be directed not only at new achievements, but also at preserving hard-won gains. The international community should condemn and reject the destructive behaviour of the US Administration and its economic terrorism against other countries.

52. Ms MAHAMADOU (Niger), offering condolences to the Agency, the Government and people of Japan and the family and friends of Mr Amano, said that the late Director General had steered the Agency in a modest, respectful and effective manner.

53. As part of the Niger Renaissance Programme, her Government had decided to promote the peaceful uses of the atom for socioeconomic development, introducing nuclear power into its national and regional energy mixes. To ensure that nuclear activities were secure and safe for people and the environment, the country's institutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks had been brought into line with international standards, in accordance with the national nuclear programme and strategic plan of action coordinated by the HANEA. A law had been passed on safety, security and the peaceful use of nuclear energy and a National Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority had been set up.

54. With significant reserves of uranium and thorium, the Niger was committed to the ideals and objectives of the Agency. Volatile prices on the uranium market had resulted in delays in several mining projects and the closure of two uranium mines. The impact on socioeconomic forecasts had prompted the Government to respond with administrative and technical compensation measures, developing investment policies and strategies that had already started to yield results.

55. Pursuing socioeconomic development and new mining and industrial policies entailed an increase in the Niger's electricity generation capacity. The first phase of its plan to diversify its energy sources had culminated in an INIR mission in April 2018. HANEA had been instructed to implement the recommendations set out in the mission report swiftly and to scale up activities under the second phase.

56. The applications of nuclear science and technology had led to significant gains in food production, among other things by increasing the tolerance of certain crop varieties to the Sahel's adverse climatic conditions. The Niger intended to build on its achievements in improving food security and cooperate further with the Agency. The country had been selected for a pilot IWAVE Project, aimed at enhancing tools for sustainable water resource management and improving the availability of information with a view to ensuring universal access to water and greater cooperation in managing shared resources.

57. Communicable and non-communicable diseases remained a significant public health challenge, with high morbidity and mortality rates. As part of its malaria control efforts, which comprised prevention and awareness-raising activities, her country intended to use the SIT to eradicate insect vectors. To tackle cancer and cardiovascular diseases, wide-ranging strategies were being implemented with support from technical and financial partners. Her country's efforts in awareness-raising, prevention, advocacy, early detection and effective treatment were supported by the Tattali-Iyali Foundation. Thanks to the country's nuclear medicine unit, which the Agency had helped to equip, the range of in vivo investigation and diagnosis services had been expanded considerably, facilitating early detection of cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Work on a National Cancer Centre was nearing completion and the three-phase road map agreed between the Niger and the Agency was being implemented.

58. Given its challenging security situation, the Niger was committed to strengthening its nuclear security regime to prevent, detect and respond effectively to any criminal use of nuclear or radioactive material or the threat thereof. The 32nd African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government had provided an opportunity to test the effectiveness of the national nuclear security strategy, which had been improved with Agency support. The Niger's capacity to tackle threats involving ionizing radiation had been enhanced thanks to the Agency's training of around 20 Nigerien trainers in detection tools and techniques and the subsequent Government-funded training for more than 200 members of the security and defence forces. Her country expressed its gratitude to the Agency, the Governments of China, France, Japan and the USA, and other partners for their support.

59. Mr PERRY (United States of America) read out the following message from President Trump:

"I send my greetings to the delegates of the 63rd IAEA General Conference. I also want to extend the deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Director General Yukiya Amano. Director General Amano's diplomacy, wisdom and influence helped make the world a better and safer place.

"The United States supports the IAEA's important role in ensuring that the peaceful application and growth of nuclear energy, science and technology continue to contribute to peace and prosperity throughout the world. Nuclear power used responsibly provides a safe, secure, reliable and carbon-free form of energy. Backed by high standards of safety, security and non-proliferation, including a comprehensive safeguards agreement with an additional protocol, nuclear energy contributes to sustainable development and is a critical part of the global energy future. I welcome the IAEA's efforts to prepare States to use it responsibly.

"The United States remains committed to addressing the threats posed by the nuclear programmes of both North Korea and Iran. In recent months, Iranian actions have been of great concern, as Iran continues to use its nuclear programme to extort the international community and threaten regional security. My Administration will continue to apply maximum pressure both diplomatically and economically to deny Iran any pathway to a nuclear weapon. We will also continue to work towards final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

"For nearly 50 years, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has prevented the spread of nuclear weapons. The IAEA, by promoting the responsible use of nuclear energy and ensuring its use

remains peaceful, has been critical to this success. The United States stands ready to reinforce and expand that treaty's impact, while recognizing its objectives can only be realized when all States comply with their arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. We invite the IAEA community to join us in this noble cause.

"The United States and the global community must continue to work together to safely and responsibly advance nuclear technology. On behalf of the United States, I wish those attending the IAEA a productive conference and look forward to continuing our work to address these critical issues."

60. Reaffirming his country's condemnation of the attack on Saudi Arabia by the Islamic Republic of Iran and calling on other States likewise to condemn it, he said that Iran must be held responsible for its deliberate attack on the global economy and energy market. President Trump had authorized the release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve if needed; the USA was confident that the market was resilient and would respond positively.

61. As the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT approached, all nations must adhere to the Agency's verification standards and rededicate themselves to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. Iran must abandon its nuclear ambitions, end its malign behaviour and fully cooperate with the Agency. To that end, the international community should maintain the same resolve that had resulted in the Singapore Summit held in September 2019. The event had given hope for the full, verified denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which would result in progress for the people of the DPRK. Nuclear power must be harnessed for the peaceful uses of science, technology and energy, not to cause death.

62. The USA applauded the Agency for protecting peaceful uses by promoting the highest safeguards standards for nuclear and radioactive material. Rightly applied, peaceful nuclear power could change the world. It was unconscionable that more than one billion people were living without electricity. The international community should work to provide them with safe, clean, reliable nuclear energy and to embrace the full potential of nuclear power.

63. Mr LIKHACHEV (Russian Federation), expressing sorrow at the untimely death of Mr Amano, said that the late Director General had been an outstanding diplomat and key proponent of consolidating international security, strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and using atoms for peace. At a difficult time, the Agency could count on the Russian Federation's support.

64. Extensive work to improve the safety standards system had been prompted by the main lesson learned from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident: that safety was the priority. Countries embarking on nuclear energy programmes were assisted in developing their nuclear infrastructure, with the involvement of their national regulatory authorities. In 2022, Russia would host an Agency conference for technical support organizations, and it welcomed the Agency's involvement in training qualified personnel in embarking countries. Over the preceding three years, more than 450 experts had been trained as part of Russian programmes, and his country had allocated an additional €4 million to ensure their continuation.

65. Safety could not be ensured solely through efforts to strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks; a strategic focus on technology development was also needed. Rosatom held regular training sessions using digital tools to instil a safety culture and had joined the Vision Zero initiative. The Russian Federation was building NPPs with enhanced safety levels and sharing its designs with partners abroad. One plant was nearing completion in Belarus, while construction projects for generating units in China, Bangladesh, India and Turkey were under way. Construction work had commenced at sites in Hungary, Finland and Egypt and the NPP project in Uzbekistan was gathering pace. Russia had made extensive use of the Agency's expert review services, including hosting an OSART mission in 2018.

66. In consolidating its role as the leading authority on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and fostering international cooperation, the Agency, and in particular the Secretariat, had key contributions to make in the implementation of commitments stemming from the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the achievement of the SDGs. His country welcomed the IPCC's landmark decision to include nuclear power in mitigation scenarios for limiting global warming. The commissioning of new, state of the art NPPs should therefore be accelerated, as it would lead to the construction of new towns, roads and infrastructure, thereby creating new jobs, increasing income from taxes and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. SMRs could help to develop remote regions where safe, cheap energy was needed, and the Agency's work to extend existing safety standards to that technology was welcome. Having undergone comprehensive tests, the Akademik Lomonosov floating NPP had recently arrived in Pevek, Russia's northernmost town.

67. At the initiative of the Secretariat, in particular Mr Amano, the preceding decade had seen a growing focus on the non-power applications of nuclear energy, including in science, health care, industry and agriculture. In his opening address to the ATOMEXPO 2019 International Forum, President Putin had highlighted the new opportunities offered by nuclear technology, including in medicine, material science, and space and arctic exploration. The Agency should broaden its focus in the search for solutions to 21st century challenges in areas such as nuclear fusion, hydrogen production, digitization and global waste management.

68. The Russian Federation welcomed the Agency's efforts to encourage interaction among States in the area of non-power applications. Together with local partners, it was establishing multipurpose centres for nuclear research and technology in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Zambia, and similar projects were planned with Mongolia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Serbia and Viet Nam. Cooperation extended beyond traditional nuclear topics: in 2019, Rosatom had become a strategic partner for the WorldSkills Competition, held in Kazan, Russian Federation, and attended by participants from 65 countries. Such work required a sustainable, predictable international environment based on trust and partnership.

69. The Russian Federation had pursued a consistent policy of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and intended to take an active part in the 2020 NPT Review Conference. The Agency's safeguards system, which was central to verification under the NPT, should remain objective, depoliticized, technically feasible and understandable for Member States. The Russian Federation had worked hard on the JCPOA and called on all concerned to do their utmost to stabilize the current situation.

70. The Agency, at a pivotal stage in its development, was faced with many complex challenges. In order to surmount them, it must remain a predictable and depoliticized forum for cooperation and the exchange of experience among its Member States.

71. Mr PELTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the EU, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and San Marino aligned themselves with his statement. The EU offered its deepest condolences to the family of late Director General Yukiya Amano and to the Agency staff.

72. The EU was fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It continued to support the universalization of the NPT and called upon States that had not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States. The Agency safeguards system was important in the implementation of the NPT.

73. The EU expressed its resolute commitment to and continued support for the JCPOA and was determined to continue working with the international community to preserve the plan. The EU deeply regretted the USA's withdrawal from the JCPOA and the reimposition of sanctions, and called on all countries to refrain from taking actions that impeded the implementation of JCPOA commitments. The

EU was deeply concerned that, as confirmed by the Agency, the Islamic Republic of Iran had exceeded the JCPOA stockpile limit for enriched uranium. The EU was particularly concerned about recent Agency reports regarding Iran's expansion of its centrifuge research and development activities. The EU had repeatedly stressed that full implementation of the JCPOA by Iran remained essential. It noted Iran's stated intention to continue to participate in the JCPOA and urged Iran to reverse those steps and return to full JCPOA compliance without delay. It supported the efforts of the JCPOA participants in addressing those issues within the JCPOA framework, including efforts by the Joint Commission. The EU urged Iran to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the Agency, including through cooperation in the implementation of its CSA and additional protocol. The EU restated its full support for the Agency.

74. The EU urged the DPRK to embark on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and to take specific steps in that direction. The EU encouraged the DPRK to further engage in meaningful discussions with all relevant parties as the international community worked towards lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. The EU urged the DPRK to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and return to the NPT and to Agency safeguards at an early date, and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

75. The EU urged the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate promptly and transparently with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues and to conclude and implement an additional protocol as soon as possible. It remained a strategic priority of the EU to support peace and stability in the entire Middle East. The EU fully supported the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other WMDs and their delivery systems in the Middle East, and was funding a UN Institute for Disarmament Research project to compile ideas for the way forward.

76. CSAs, together with additional protocols, constituted the current verification standard, and the EU continued to call for their universalization without delay. It welcomed the fact that Liberia and Serbia had recently brought additional protocols into force. The EU strongly supported the continued improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation through the SLA.

77. The EU had supported the establishment of the IAEA LEU Bank with contributions of around €25 million. It noted with satisfaction that the Agency aimed to have LEU delivered to the Storage Facility before the end of 2019.

78. All countries had the sovereign right to decide whether or not to include nuclear power in their energy mix, and Member States pursued different approaches to energy security and climate change. In that regard, the EU looked forward to the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power.

79. The EU and its member States attached the utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety. The EU encouraged all its member States to demonstrate their commitment to finding safe radioactive waste management solutions. It also encouraged all Agency Member States, especially those that had not done so recently and embarking countries, to request peer review missions. The process of planning and constructing nuclear facilities should be underpinned by dialogue with neighbouring countries and effective and transparent public communication.

80. The EU stressed the need to continue strengthening nuclear security worldwide in order to ensure continued access to the many benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. To that end, it highlighted the importance of becoming party to and fully implementing relevant treaties. The EU strongly supported the Agency's central role in improving global nuclear security by strengthening international cooperation and providing direct assistance to Member States. It welcomed the preparations for the 2020 International Conference on Nuclear Security and encouraged all Member

States to participate at ministerial level and to commit to an ambitious and forward-looking ministerial declaration.

81. The EU reaffirmed its long-standing and strong support for the TC programme, to which it was the second largest contributor. The EU strongly supported the Agency's activities aimed at developing radiation and nuclear technologies and applying them in achieving the SDGs. Nuclear technologies could make life-changing contributions to the health and well-being of people across the world.

82. He concluded by emphasizing the importance the EU attached to the empowerment of women and gender equality within the Agency.

83. Mr AL-SULTAN (Saudi Arabia), having offered condolences to the Agency and to the family of Mr Amano, the late Director General, said that his country supported the peaceful uses of atomic energy, which could contribute to sustainable development for people and the environment. Saudi Arabia endorsed international cooperation to transfer nuclear technology and expertise within the framework of the NPT and CSAs.

84. Saudi Arabia was pursuing its national atomic energy programme in full compliance with relevant legislation and international technical standards, working with the Agency and other organizations and countries with experience in the nuclear field. His country had made use of the valuable technical and advisory services offered by the Agency and had hosted various missions: INIR, low power research reactor safety review, Technical Safety Review, IRRS and EPREV.

85. Enhancing the role of nuclear and renewable energy in power generation was essential for reducing carbon emissions and expanding the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly energy sources. Those approaches would be at the top of Saudi Arabia's agenda during its presidency of the Group of Twenty in 2020.

86. Given the importance of all States adhering to the NPT and its key provisions, the slow progress in achieving the Treaty's ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament was a matter of concern. Saudi Arabia called for universalization of the NPT and for all nuclear facilities to be placed under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. It also supported all initiatives aimed at establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs in the Middle East and called on the international community to take meaningful action to implement the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. All concerned States should participate in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held in November 2019 in New York.

87. Recent developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programme, in particular Iran's persistent violations of its commitments related to nuclear activities and its breach of restrictions on LEU stockpiling and uranium enrichment, gave cause for great concern. Such actions represented flagrant violations and blatant defiance of international law. The international community should confront such violations and adopt a tougher stance towards Iran, in particular in the light of Iran's long track record of violating international norms, engaging in aggressive practices and sabotage, seeking WMDs and continuing to support terrorist groups and militias by providing them with strategic weapon systems and means of delivery. Such actions continued to pose a serious threat to regional and global peace and security. Failure to comply with key operational safety standards at nuclear facilities, as evidenced inter alia by reports on emergency arrangements at Bushehr NPP, which was located in a seismically active area, had raised further concerns about the possible occurrence of a nuclear catastrophe in the region. The impact of such a catastrophe would extend to Saudi Arabia and neighbouring States and would destroy marine life in the Arabian Gulf. Greater international efforts to verify operational safety measures at the Bushehr plant were needed urgently, especially as Iran was not a party to relevant treaties, including the CNS.

88. As part of its efforts to help combat all forms of terrorism, including nuclear, Saudi Arabia had donated US \$10 million to establish a specialized nuclear security centre under Agency supervision. It called upon Member States to contribute to funding the centre and to support the Agency in ensuring its effective operation. His country strongly supported the Agency's efforts to organize the International Conference on Nuclear Security to be held in February 2020 and called upon Member States to make the conference a success and help enhance the global nuclear security regime.

89. Mr ELMARKABI (Egypt), offering condolences on the death of Mr Amano, said that the late Director General's success during his time as leader of the Agency would stand as a testament to his commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

90. As part of its comprehensive national strategy to diversify its sources of energy generation with a view to meeting its growing social and economic needs, Egypt had finalized its peaceful nuclear programme, under which it planned to construct four 1200 MW nuclear reactors in accordance with the international nuclear safety and security standards set by the Agency. To that end, Egypt had made good use of the Agency's advisory services. It had submitted a self-assessment report to the Agency in January 2019 and had hosted two technical delegations in preparation for an INIR mission in October 2019. Such actions reflected the policy of complete transparency that Egypt had adopted in developing its nuclear programme, in particular with regard to the integrity of its comprehensive infrastructure assessments, the provision of human resources training and the examination of treaties and agreements to which Egypt was considering acceding. The Agency had commended Egypt for its efforts in that regard.

91. The success of the Agency's mission was dependent on its ability to maintain a balance between the three pillars of its mandate. While supporting all three, Egypt accorded particular importance to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and had therefore paid its contribution to the TCF in full and on time. It was essential that the TCF receive adequate funding to enable the TC programme to continue. Egypt was preparing TC projects to meet its social and economic needs, in the areas of health, food and agriculture, industry, water resources and mineral resources. It encouraged the countries holding the presidencies of the G-77 and China and the Arab Group to focus on promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and using them to achieve the SDGs, in particular in developing countries.

92. He thanked the Agency for selecting Egypt to host the AFRA High Level Policy Review Seminar in November 2019 and commended the success of the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges in November 2018, including the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, which reflected States' commitment to the TC programme. A nuclear science student from an Egyptian university had attended the Conference to discuss the importance of encouraging future generations into the nuclear field. Egypt reiterated its request to host the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy planned for 2021. Allowing it to host the conference would reflect the international community's support for African efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in particular as no African State had yet hosted the event.

93. Egypt underscored the importance of the Agency's verification of the non-diversion of nuclear materials. As the comprehensive safeguards regime was the legal cornerstone of the Agency's safeguards system, in accordance with the NPT, it was essential that steps be taken to ensure its universalization. Nevertheless, efforts to develop the safeguards system should not entail any obligations for States over and above their existing contractual obligations. It was also important to avoid politicizing the standards that governed verification activities.

94. The universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime was an essential step towards establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East and upholding the right of its inhabitants to be protected from the threat of nuclear weapons. Egypt continued to take vigorous action to establish such a zone and to ensure that all nuclear facilities in the region were placed under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards.

Every year, Egypt submitted a draft resolution to the General Conference requesting the Agency to implement its safeguards in the Middle East and to ensure that all nuclear facilities were placed under safeguards. Notwithstanding the support shown for the draft resolution each year by a large majority of Member States, no real action had been taken to implement it on account of the refusal of one State in the Middle East to place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards. Egypt had once again presented such a resolution to the General Conference in an effort to ensure that action would be taken to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons. It called on all States to support the draft resolution.

95. Egypt welcomed the scheduled Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. Based on an Arab initiative, the Conference would provide a serious opportunity to break the deadlock hindering the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and begin the process of drafting a convention on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Egypt urged all interested States to participate in the conference, at which the States of the region would have the chance to engage in dialogue about their concerns regarding the items on its agenda.

96. Egypt continued to accord great importance to nuclear security. It had completed the first stage of a project to modernize the physical protection system used at its two research reactors and had recently launched the second stage. Responsibility for nuclear security lay with Member States and should not be linked to other considerations, above all a State's right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Furthermore, the Agency's nuclear energy activities should be funded through voluntary contributions only, not from the Regular Budget.

97. In cooperation with Bulgaria, Egypt was chairing preparatory meetings for the scientific and technical programme during the 2020 International Conference on Nuclear Security. Egypt hoped that the conference would produce consensus-based results reflecting the views of Member States and helping to strengthen international nuclear security.

98. Mr NASIR (Indonesia), extending condolences on the death of Director General Yukiya Amano, said that Mr Amano would always be remembered for his admirable dedication and exemplary devotion to the cause of atoms for peace and development.

99. Indonesia welcomed the progress made in the Agency's main fields of activity, which contributed to global peace, health and prosperity. At the same time, it was most unfortunate that the current international political and security situation was not moving in a more positive direction. The world was facing growing tensions that continued to widen the gap between nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. His country urged the JCPOA parties to remain committed to its continued, full and effective implementation and called upon the international community to continue to support the plan.

100. Despite the need for comprehensive nuclear security, measures to strengthen it must not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities or undermine the established priorities of the Agency's TC programme. Indonesia recognized and supported the Agency's work to assist Member States in strengthening nuclear security. The handheld detection equipment that the Agency had provided to Indonesia would reinforce national detection and response capabilities during major public events.

101. As a Contracting Party to the CNS, Indonesia was committed to maintaining a high level of safety by establishing Fundamental Safety Principles with regard to the operation of its research reactors. It welcomed the legislative assistance furnished by the Agency in the revision of its nuclear energy law.

102. Indonesia supported the Agency in strengthening its valuable contribution to fulfilling the SDGs, including through the TC programme, and worked closely with the Agency both as a beneficiary and as a TC provider for other Member States. An Indonesian institution had been designated a Collaborating

Centre for plant mutation breeding. His country had become a contributor to the Peaceful Uses Initiative and was committed to providing technical capacity building to other countries under a nuclear capacity building project planned for 2020.

103. Applying nuclear technology in agriculture was an important innovation towards achieving national food security, in particular with regard to rice and soybeans. To that end, Indonesia had established three Agro Techno Parks and one Science and Techno Park, and was collaborating with the Agency, the FAO and UNIDO.

104. In the area of health, Indonesia had cooperated with the Agency on cancer therapy and radiopharmaceuticals. For some years, imPACT had been improving diagnosis and treatment for cancer patients in his country by means of nuclear technology. Indonesia had also successfully produced radiopharmaceuticals to alleviate bone pain in cancer patients and to diagnose and treat neuroblastoma. They had been provided to end users thanks to cooperation among national stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry.

105. His country had started to use its Kartini research reactor as an Internet-based reactor laboratory to teach students in nuclear engineering and other disciplines. Interested delegations could learn more at the Indonesian exhibition stand during the session.

106. Commending the Secretariat's efforts to increase representation of under-represented countries when recruiting staff, especially at the Professional and managerial levels, he called for the efforts to be assigned high priority. Indonesia would continue to support the Agency's work, among other things by providing high-quality audit services with a view to promoting its accountability and transparency.

107. Ms MANESCU (Romania), conveying her country's condolences to the Agency, Japan and the family of late Director General Yukiya Amano, whose legacy should be upheld and expanded, said that the Agency continued to make a fundamental contribution to international peace and security and global development. For over 60 years, the Agency had been instrumental in tackling nuclear proliferation challenges by ensuring the effective application of safeguards, providing Member States with better access to the benefits of nuclear science and technology, and strengthening nuclear safety and security. The peaceful application and safe use of nuclear technologies were critical for States to achieve sustainable development. Under the motto Atoms for Peace and Development, Mr Amano had striven to illustrate how relevant the role of the Agency was in the life of ordinary people.

108. As a founding member, Romania had extensive knowledge of what the Agency meant to the international community. In the current climate, the Agency's implementation of its statutory activities to facilitate international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were more important than ever. Profoundly attached to the Agency's core mission, her country had decided to nominate a candidate for the position of Director General to guide the Agency in fulfilling it. Ambassador Cornel Feruță was esteemed among the Agency community, and his deep commitment to upholding the organization's values and independence was well known. He would be able to contribute loyalty, professionalism and impartiality to the further enhancement of the Agency, as well as to its prestige, and she called on all Member States to support his candidature.

109. It was important for all countries to honour their obligations under the NPT, the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Treaty offered the best route towards the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, as stated in Article VI of the Agency's Statute, in a way that promoted international stability and security. Romania encouraged all countries to respond in a constructive and mutually beneficial way to the Agency's needs and to contribute their share in order to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation. The additional protocol and CSAs played a critical role and must become universal in order to strengthen the Agency's capacity to detect and respond to non-compliance.

110. Full and rigorous implementation of the JCPOA was key, as was full cooperation with the Agency, which was working relentlessly to monitor it. Its long-term mission of verifying and monitoring the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear-related commitments served to raise the Agency's profile. By seeking out the truth, the Agency experts involved in that and other missions were laying the foundation of the trust needed for peace. In a similar vein, the DPRK should abandon its nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and resume cooperation with the Agency. Until then, the existing sanctions should continue.

111. As the risk of nuclear terrorism was a worldwide concern, her country encouraged all States to become parties to the relevant international instruments and create a strong nuclear safety and security regime. Romania fully supported the objectives of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, a valuable contribution to the global nuclear security architecture. In February 2020, her country was to co-chair the International Conference on Nuclear Security, which it hoped would highlight the positive role of nuclear security in the context of the peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

112. Throughout the years, Romania had demonstrated its commitment to nuclear safety. It had significantly strengthened its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety and made important progress in the management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Her country was developing the first national laboratory in the field of nuclear forensics, in close collaboration with the Agency. The Nuclear Training Centre at the Horia Hulubei National Institute for R&D in Physics and Nuclear Engineering offered courses in nuclear safety and security and training for representatives of authorities with responsibilities in the nuclear field. Under the Agency's extrabudgetary programme, a project was in place to improve disaster resilience and preparedness for radiological and nuclear events.

113. During its first EU presidency, her country had shown its commitment to the Agency through the workshop on Nuclear Security: From Political Commitment to Practical Implementation'. Romania also continued to make voluntary financial contributions to the TC programme. Technical cooperation was essential for her country's Nuclear and Radioactive Waste Agency, which was building a national near surface repository scheduled for completion by 2023.

114. Mr ZHANG Jianhua (China), offering deep condolences on the death of Mr Amano, said that despite his health condition the late Director General had attended the Board in June 2019 and made time to meet the Chinese delegation. His dedication and professionalism had been admirable and deeply moving.

115. In 70 years, China's nuclear industry had grown from nothing to comprise 47 operational nuclear power units, with 11 units under construction. The Chinese-designed Hualong One reactor, various overseas projects and the high temperature gas cooled reactor demonstration project were making steady progress. The design and review of new types of reactor, such as SMRs and floating reactors, were also moving forward, and nuclear technology was widely used in areas such as radiation processing, medicine and public security.

116. China took nuclear safety and security seriously. A recent white paper on nuclear safety in China set out its basic nuclear safety principles and policies and detailed its good track record. On 10 September 2019, the Agency and China had signed a cooperation agreement on establishing a nuclear security technology collaboration centre. China stood ready to make a larger contribution to capacity building and nuclear security in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

117. The development of China's nuclear industry continued to be uneven, with room for improvement in some areas, so the Chinese Government highly valued technical cooperation with the Agency and other countries so as to improve its overall capacity in nuclear energy and ensure the safe, efficient and healthy development of the nuclear industry. China upheld the principles of openness, sharing, cooperation and win-win outcomes in developing its own nuclear energy and technology, while also

striving to contribute to other developing countries' efforts in that regard. Over the previous two years, China had hosted some 30 Agency activities, and 78 visiting scientists had studied in China. It had also launched the Atomic Energy Scholarship of China, which had been awarded to 73 foreign students from more than 20 developing countries pursuing higher degrees in nuclear engineering. China would contribute an additional €300 000 in 2019 to ReNuAL and ReNuAL+ and had pledged €10 170 000 to the TCF for 2020.

118. China would actively support the Agency's efforts in four key areas. First, the Agency should respond to the needs of Member States, in particular developing countries, further step up its technical assistance, and strive for balance between promotional and non-promotional activities, while ensuring adequate and reliable funding for technical cooperation. China would continue to pay its contributions to the TCF in full, so as to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide.

119. Second, in promoting nuclear technology applications for sustainable development, the Agency should take full advantage of Member States' technological development to further advance international cooperation — above all in radioactive waste management, decommissioning and the geological disposal of high level radioactive waste — and further expand the application of nuclear techniques in areas such as medicine and agriculture.

120. Third, in the area of strengthening nuclear safety and security and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Agency should pursue its efforts to develop a comprehensive set of safety and security regulations and standards and promote a nuclear safety and security culture in order to enhance public confidence in nuclear energy by promoting universal application of the CSA and additional protocol, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards and monitoring, and mobilizing Member State resources to achieve safeguards objectives.

121. Fourth, the Agency should pursue dialogue and consultations to properly resolve sensitive nuclear issues. China had always advocated dialogue and negotiations to peacefully settle the DPRK and Iranian nuclear issues and had exerted tireless efforts to that end. The Agency should maintain strict professionalism, objectivity and fairness so that it could continue to play a constructive role in tackling those issues. China stood ready to work with all relevant parties towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the proper resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue, to preserve the international non-proliferation regime and ensure regional peace and stability.

122. Mr FAURIE (Argentina) reiterated that his Government deeply regretted the death of Yukiya Amano, who had led the Agency for ten years. He also expressed solidarity with South Africa following the death of Ms Bavelile Hlongwa.

123. Argentina was a long-standing supporter of the Agency's role in promoting the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy and managing the safeguards system under the NPT. International cooperation was essential to expand the benefits of nuclear energy and promote its use in achieving development goals.

124. For more than six decades, Argentina had used nuclear energy to drive development in a wide range of fields. It had a robust nuclear programme that included three operational NPPs, one reactor under construction, numerous research reactors and the capacity to produce nuclear fuels, heavy water and medical radioisotopes, which had enabled it to develop a reputation as a reliable global provider. Argentina was also carrying out a number of projects both with traditional partners and in new markets. Women involved in the Argentine nuclear programme — radiochemists, mathematicians and engineers — had contributed significantly to its success both nationwide and around the world. Some had received international recognition, a testament to their abilities, professionalism and dedication.

125. In nuclear matters, cooperation between Argentina and Brazil was one of the strongest in the world, contributing to regional integration and international peace and security. The year 2019 marked the 25th anniversary of the Quadripartite Agreement, which had made it possible for ABACC and the Agency to conduct efficient verification inspections in both countries in order to offer strong guarantees to the international community regarding their exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy. Both verification agencies displayed high levels of maturity during cooperation activities.

126. The Latin American and Caribbean region had pioneered the world's first NWFZ in a densely populated area, and yet was the only one not to have led the Agency; that had prompted Argentina to put forward Ambassador Grossi as a candidate for the role of Director General. A career diplomat with over 35 years of experience in domestic and international roles, including within the Agency, Ambassador Grossi would provide the necessary technical expertise and diplomatic leadership to ensure that the Agency remained the leading international institution in the nuclear field. Argentina hoped that the Member States would support his candidacy.

127. Nuclear safety remained one of the most serious challenges that the international community faced. The Argentine Nuclear Regulatory Authority was the independent body in charge of overseeing nuclear activities, including the construction of reactors. Argentina had confirmed that all new nuclear plants in the country would be designed and constructed in line with the principles set out in the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. In addition, Argentina had submitted its eighth safety report under the CNS, covering the period January 2016 to May 2019.

128. In 2019, the Embalse NPP had been refurbished to extend its operating life. The process had been closely monitored by the Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the plant's operating licence had recently been renewed. The project was the first of its kind in Argentina, the third of its kind worldwide for a CANDU reactor and the most significant in terms of the scope of refurbishment and replacements. During its second life cycle, the plant would generate 6% more power for the national grid and would continue to produce cobalt-60 for the medical and industrial radioisotope markets.

129. Argentina had worked with the Agency to ensure nuclear safety and security during major public events, such as the Group of Twenty summit held in the country in 2018, and frequently hosted important nuclear safety-related events. It also participated in the Nuclear Security Contact Group and had acceded to the CPPNM and its Amendment. In that connection, Argentina called for universalization of the Amendment.

130. Argentina's Nuclear Regulatory Authority had held a meeting with the Agency to prepare for an IRRS mission in 2020. Close cooperation between FORO and the Agency had enabled FORO to continue to run an effective technical programme. A forum on stress tests at NPPs in the Ibero-American region had been held, the results of which had been recognized at the Ibero-American Summit and at the extraordinary meetings of the Contracting Parties to the CNS. FORO's contributions to the field should be disseminated worldwide, among other things through relevant General Conference resolutions.

131. Having joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in 2010, Argentina had hosted a plenary meeting of the Initiative in Buenos Aires in June 2019 to review progress made in the preceding two years' nuclear detection, nuclear forensic analysis, and response and mitigation. His country would continue to actively support the efforts of the Agency and the international community to achieve safe nuclear energy and ensure non-proliferation. In line with its motto of Atoms for Peace and Development, the Agency must support Member States' efforts to attain the SDGs, as nuclear science and technology had a role to play in energy, health care, food, water and environmental protection.

132. Mr TAKEMOTO (Japan), recalling the €2.6 million shortfall in funding for the ReNuAL project identified by the late Director General during meetings of the Board of Governors in June 2019, said that his country would donate €1 million to the project and encouraged other Member States to contribute in the same spirit. Mr Amano's achievements had been significant, and it was to be hoped that his policy course would be maintained and his vision and accomplishments passed down to future generations.

133. Long committed to disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan was keen to work with the international community to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all the DPRK's nuclear weapons and other WMDs, ballistic missiles of all ranges, and related programmes and facilities. All States must cooperate to ensure full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and to support talks between the USA and the DPRK. As verification was indispensable in achieving the denuclearization of the DPRK, Japan considered the use of the Agency's expertise, knowledge and experience in that regard to be of the utmost importance.

134. As it continued to support the JCPOA as a means of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and securing stability in the Middle East region, Japan was deeply concerned about the measures taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to exceed the limits set by the JCPOA. Iran should return to its commitments and refrain from taking any additional steps that could undermine the Plan. Japan would support the Agency as it continued to fulfil its important role in monitoring and verifying implementation of the JCPOA with neutrality and professionalism, as advocated by the late Director General.

135. Japan continued to do its utmost to achieve a successful outcome of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. The Agency's safeguards were vital in ensuring non-proliferation and its efforts to improve their effectiveness and efficiency were welcome. Japan was also committed to stringent domestic safeguards and encouraged the universalization of CSAs and the additional protocol. Japan would continue to promote enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards through frameworks such as the Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation and the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network. The international community should continue making efforts in that regard.

136. The Agency's increased efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the Atoms for Peace and Development motto contributed to global socioeconomic development and the achievement of the SDGs. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology in November 2018, which Japan had been proud to co-chair, had highlighted the importance of the Agency's focus on peaceful nuclear applications. His country continued to support the Agency technically and financially through the PUI and other cooperation projects with Japanese companies, universities and research institutes.

137. In view of the Agency's central role in strengthening the international nuclear security framework Japan would strive for the success of the International Conference on Nuclear Security planned for February 2020. An International Physical Protection Advisory Service follow-up mission to Japan in December 2018 had found its nuclear security regime to be robust and well established. Japan was working hard on security arrangements for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and was taking all possible measures against terrorism, including nuclear terrorism; a table-top exercise was planned for October 2019.

138. The report of the fourth review mission on Japan's decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi NPP, conducted in November 2018, had concluded that his country had completed the transition from emergency to stabilized situation and had noted many improvements since the Agency's previous mission. Japan would follow the mission's advice in continuing to take every possible measure to advance decommissioning of the plant.

139. Progress had also been made in contaminated water management and environmental remediation activities, such as the completion of whole area decontamination in off-site areas, excluding ‘difficult to return’ zones, which had resulted in the lifting of evacuation orders and the subsequent return of residents. The Agency review had deemed public safety to be ensured, as the results of monitoring the surrounding sea region and offshore areas indicated no rise in radionuclide concentrations, which remained within the limits set in the WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality. Water purified using the advanced liquid processing system was free of radionuclides other than tritium and was stored on the premises in tanks with double weirs. Its handling was subject to comprehensive and continuous inspection.

140. Since the accident at Fukushima Daiichi, Japan had been informing the international community in a transparent manner — for example at 103 briefing sessions held in Tokyo and in monthly communications to diplomatic missions — and would continue to do so. Criticism of its activities had had no basis in fact or scientific evidence. The information provided by Japan and the Agency should be discussed impartially and rationally. Import regulations not based on scientific evidence were seriously hindering the rehabilitation of Fukushima and should be lifted promptly by the countries concerned.

141. With safety its top priority, Japan was fully committed to restarting domestic nuclear reactors in view of the steady progress being made at Fukushima. If greenhouse gas emissions were to be reduced by 80% by 2050, it would be vital to explore all energy options, including renewable and nuclear energy, in line with the strategic energy plan and longer term strategy approved by the Government in June 2019 reflecting the Paris Agreement. Japan was seeking to reduce carbon emissions through innovative technological developments to produce safe, economically viable and flexible reactors, building on the knowledge and expertise of its technology companies.

142. In 2018, the Japan Atomic Energy Commission had revised its basic principles on the country’s use of plutonium for the first time in 15 years. In line with its continued adherence to the principle of not possessing plutonium without a specific purpose, the Government had announced a policy of reducing the size of its plutonium stockpile. The Agency had concluded that all nuclear material in Japan, including plutonium, remained in peaceful activities under stringent Agency safeguards and that there were no proliferation issues. In pursuing plutonium thermal power generation, Japan would increase transparency in the use and management of its plutonium and continue to accept the Agency’s safeguards. It would also strengthen its international collaboration in the final disposal of high-level radioactive waste. In 2020, Japan would host an ARTEMIS mission on the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Research and development would continue into nuclear fusion — including through the ITER project and broader approach activities — and into helical systems.

143. Mr ALBUQUERQUE (Brazil) said that nuclear power was playing a significant role in transforming Brazil’s future, beginning with fundamental structural reforms aimed at opening up new opportunities for long term investment. The nuclear sector was a unique and irreplaceable pillar in Brazil’s strategy for sustainable development. Clean, safe and secure nuclear power had long been a vital component in Brazil’s energy mix, helping to supply heavily populated and industrialized regions where demand for energy was high. Owing to its privileged position as one of a small number of countries with both large uranium reserves and mastery of the fuel cycle, Brazil would continue to invest in the nuclear sector. The Brazilian Government hoped to make the Angra III NPP operational by 2026, as its timely completion was critical to ensuring security of supply in the country’s vast and expanding power grid.

144. Brazil intended to preserve its environmentally friendly energy generation model. The International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power in October 2019 would provide an excellent opportunity to showcase how nuclear energy could contribute to environmental protection. A multipurpose reactor, on which significant progress had been made, would allow Brazil to

meet its domestic radioisotope and radiopharmaceutical needs and to increase research capabilities in nuclear techniques.

145. Brazil was taking steps to enhance the control, oversight and accountability of nuclear fuel cycle activities. A new business model was planned for uranium mining and management of uranium tailings, to include public–private partnerships. As the country expected to become a major supplier for the international fuel market, up-to-date environmental and social remediation measures were needed. Committed to the highest standards of nuclear safety and security Brazil was improving its internal controls by segregating regulatory activities from research and development. It valued the Agency's contribution in promoting education, guidance and support in those fields.

146. Argentina was Brazil's indispensable and strategic partner in the nuclear sector. By pooling their research resources, the two countries could combine their technological and engineering expertise to develop complementary SMR projects. The ABACC provided the institutional safeguards underpinning their work.

147. The late Director General, who had shown principled leadership and an unwavering commitment to ensuring that the Agency remained a force for world peace and stability, had furthered the Agency's collaboration in technical and research projects of direct interest to Brazil. In 2018, the Agency had donated two mammography units for use in naval vessels providing health care to isolated communities in the Amazon region, thereby expanding access to nuclear medicine. Moscamed Brasil, with Agency support, was researching new SIT treatments for neglected tropical diseases that affected vulnerable populations in developing countries. While Mr Amano had been unable to inaugurate the laboratories for radioisotopic investigation at Brazil's Antarctic Station as planned, his vision and enthusiasm would continue to provide inspiration, as a research laboratory there would be named in his honour.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.