

# General Conference

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## Sixty-fifth regular session

# Plenary

## Record of the First Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Monday, 20 September 2021, at 10 a.m.<sup>1</sup>*

**Temporary President:** Mr FARHANE (Morocco)

**President:** Mr MARAFI (Kuwait)

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<sup>1</sup> In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and following consultations conducted by the Chair of the Board on the Agency's working arrangements, the Board met in a physical–virtual manner, with some participants attending in person and others using the Interprefy platform.

<sup>2</sup> GC(65)/25

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## Abbreviations used in this record

AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CNESTEN	National Centre for Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technology
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
E3	EU Three
EPR	evolutionary power reactor
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNABA	Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa
HTGR	high-temperature gas-cooled reactor
IPPC	integrated pollution prevention and control
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
MESA	Middle East and South Asia Group
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone

**Abbreviations used in this record (continued)**

OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
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
SQP	small quantities protocol
RT-PCR	reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
World Bank	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

## – Opening of the session

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Conference open.
2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, he invited the delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

**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. He conveyed his deep gratitude to all Member States for their contributions to the success of the sixty-fourth regular session of the General Conference, which had taken place amid the unprecedented challenges and extraordinary international situation that had arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The international community had had to reassess its programmes, redefine its priorities and reformulate its goals.
4. He expressed appreciation for the Director General's efforts in respect of the logistical and organizational arrangements that had ensured such a successful session and one that had marked a critical juncture in the Agency's work. Since the Director General had assumed his position, the Agency had faced unparalleled challenges posed by the lockdown and changes in traditional working arrangements brought about by the pandemic. The Director General had nonetheless used his alertness of mind, clarity of vision and managerial skills to carry out the Agency's mandate in line with its motto of 'Atoms for Peace and Development', mobilizing to that end new technology platforms such as webinars, videoconferences and virtual events.
5. Morocco's presidency on behalf of the African Group had been marked by the adoption by consensus of several new resolutions. Under the resolution on the ZODIAC project<sup>3</sup>, which was aimed at mitigating future epidemics through the use of nuclear-derived techniques, the Agency was assisting Member States to achieve the SDGs, including those related to good health and well-being, life on land and partnerships. ZODIAC was a laudable initiative actively embraced and financially supported by Member States, including Morocco.
6. He commended the proactive measures taken under the resolution on the IAEA and the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup>, which had paved the way for the largest ever practical initiative to provide support to over 125 countries around the world. Under the initiative, one third of African Member States had received valuable assistance in the form of nuclear-derived technology, technical know-how and nuclear and radiological equipment for early detection and prevention of the disease.
7. The resolution on the ReNuAL project<sup>5</sup> focused on the need to modernize the facilities at Seibersdorf in order to keep pace with increasingly rapid technological developments. Worth mentioning was the leading international role played by those facilities in establishing global networks of laboratories, including those engaged in combating animal diseases, with support from, among others,

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<sup>3</sup> GC(64)/RES/12.4

<sup>4</sup> GC(64)/RES/3

<sup>5</sup> GC(64)/RES/12.3

the PUI and the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund. In the current global context, it was important to highlight the role of the Seibersdorf laboratories in supporting Member States' efforts to combat transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases. Morocco was one of the Member States that had provided financial support for the important ReNuAL project.

8. During its presidency, Morocco had ensured that the agenda of the General Conference included the role of nuclear technologies in fighting cervical cancer by organizing a high-level virtual panel discussion on the subject, with a focus on past experiences and the way forward, notably in Africa. The Conference had welcomed the results of the discussion, which had highlighted the importance of raising awareness of cervical cancer in Africa with a view to learning lessons, exchanging best practices and creating mechanisms to achieve greater synergy, dynamism and integration among all stakeholders in order to combat the disease in the present and the future.

9. AFRA — a framework for African Member States to consolidate regional cooperation by strengthening the region's sustainability and self-reliance through collaboration with regional institutions and centres of excellence — was an example of successful cooperation between Africa and the Agency. The Agency's contributions to building national capacities on the African continent were commendable. Through TC projects, it was providing support to 45 African countries, including for the implementation of national and regional projects in such areas as food and agriculture, health and nutrition, energy, nuclear knowledge development, safety, water and the environment, industrial applications and radiation technology.

10. Thanks to the ongoing cooperation between the Agency and the African continent, Morocco had been the recipient of two distinctions: on 26 January 2021, CNESTEN had been named the first IAEA Collaborating Centre on the African continent for promoting the use of nuclear techniques in water resources management, environmental protection and industrial applications; and on 16 July 2021, the Moroccan Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security Agency (AMSSNuR) had been designated the first IAEA Collaborating Centre in Africa in the field of nuclear security.

11. In June 2021, the Agency's Board of Governors had approved the observer status of the FNRBA, chaired by the AMSSNuR. The FNRBA was consequently represented at the current General Conference, thereby strengthening the role of African regulators in nuclear security and safety.

12. Morocco stressed the need to intensify efforts to review the composition of the Board of Governors as a key step towards strengthening governance within the Agency, as provided for in the amendment — adopted 21 years previously at the forty-third regular session of the General Conference — to Article VI of the Statute. Given that the amendment had been accepted by only 62 of the 116 Member States required for its entry into force, Morocco had worked during its presidency to raise States' awareness of the importance of bringing the amendment into effect. To that end, the presidency, in its communication of 21 June 2021<sup>6</sup>, had encouraged all Member States to work together to bring the amendment into force, especially as the current session of the General Conference was set to discuss the Director General's report<sup>7</sup> on progress made towards that goal.

13. In closing, he wished the new President every success.

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<sup>6</sup> GC(65)/9

<sup>7</sup> GC(65)/12

## 1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee

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

15. Mr MAZUMDAR (India), speaking on behalf of MESA, proposed Mr Marafi (Kuwait).

16. Mr Marafi (Kuwait) was elected President by acclamation.

17. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Mr Marafi and wished him a successful conference.

### **Mr Marafi (Kuwait) took the Chair.**

18. The PRESIDENT expressed his profound gratitude and appreciation to all Member States for having the confidence in him to preside over the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Conference on behalf of his country. He thanked the members of the Middle East and South Asia Group for their nomination.

19. Proud to have assumed the presidency from a fellow Arab country, he thanked Mr Farhane of Morocco, on behalf of all Member States, for his distinguished tenure as President of the previous session of the General Conference. He also expressed appreciation to the Director General and the Agency's entire staff for their professional and valuable work.

20. The General Conference met to discuss items on its agenda that importantly highlighted the Agency's crucial role in putting into practice the concept of 'Atoms for Peace and Development', transferring knowledge and maximizing the benefit of nuclear applications. Those items also highlighted the interest in developing and strengthening the concepts of nuclear security and safety at all levels and in maintaining verification systems considered to be an essential part of the non-proliferation regime.

21. The in-person attendance at the Conference was, moreover, a sign that life was gradually returning to normal following the COVID-19 pandemic, which had cast a shadow over every single aspect of work and everyday life. Member States were pleased by the return to such attendance in international forums, which had been sorely missed and which provided motivation for them to continue their shared work of improving living standards for their peoples, with technology and knowledge as their tools and the Agency's activities serving as a best example.

22. He commended the efforts of the Secretariat and its staff to maintain, without interruption or delay, the assistance provided to Member States in dealing with the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, including by devising new mechanisms to ensure continuity of the Agency's work. In that regard, ZODIAC was a promising new initiative and a valuable addition to the Agency's wide range of activities aimed at harnessing nuclear technology in the service of humanity. It was fitting that the 2021 Scientific Forum would highlight the initiative by bringing together distinguished heads of international organizations, leading scientists and prominent experts.

23. Given the importance of multilateral action and support for science and technology, his country attached the utmost priority to the Agency's pivotal role in that context and in contributing to human development and international peace and security. As a dedicated supporter of the Agency's activities, programmes and initiatives, Kuwait stressed that Member States should make available to the Agency all the resources needed for it to carry out its assigned tasks to the fullest extent.

24. He looked forward to the support of Member States, the Director General and the Secretariat in conducting the current session and stood ready to cooperate with all parties so that the discussions could proceed smoothly and make the General Conference a success for all.

25. Turning to procedural matters, he said that the Conference was required under Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure to elect 8 Vice-Presidents, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and 5 additional members of the General Committee to constitute a General Committee of 15, which he would chair.

26. He proposed that the delegates of Denmark, Ghana, Iraq, Paraguay, Poland, Thailand, the USA and Viet Nam be elected as Vice-Presidents, that Mr Bilodeau of Canada be elected as Chair of the Committee of the Whole, and that the delegates of Angola, Belgium, Bulgaria, Malta and Panama be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

27. The President's proposals were accepted.

## **5. Arrangements for the Conference** (GC(65)/17)

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

28. The PRESIDENT said that, following a series of consultations conducted by the Secretariat with Member States on the arrangements for the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Conference, on 19 July 2021 Member States had agreed by silence procedure to the arrangements contained in the annex to document GC(65)/17 so that the General Conference could pursue its work in the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those arrangements required agreement by the Conference to suspend Rules 23–25 of its Rules of Procedure and to change the time limit on statements during the General Debate from seven to five minutes.

29. He took it that the Conference wished to approve the arrangements set out in the annex to document GC(65)/17.

30. It was so decided.

31. The PRESIDENT further proposed that, before receiving the General Committee's recommendation on the provisional agenda, the General Conference should suspend Rule 42 of its Rules of Procedure and proceed with consideration of items 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 — in that order — so as not to delay the start of the regular session.

32. It was so decided.

## **2. Applications for membership of the Agency** (GC(65)/11)

33. The PRESIDENT drew attention to document GC(65)/11 containing an application for membership by Saint Kitts and Nevis. The application had been endorsed by the Board of Governors, which had submitted in that document a draft resolution to the General Conference for adoption.

34. He took it that the Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution by acclamation.

35. It was so decided.

36. The PRESIDENT congratulated Saint Kitts and Nevis on being approved for membership of the Agency.



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

37. Ms WALY (Director General, United Nations Office at Vienna), speaking on behalf of the UN family in Vienna, congratulated the President on his election and wished him luck in his mission. She wished the participants fruitful discussions and a successful session.

38. She read out the following message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

“I am pleased to send greetings to all participants at this important General Conference of the IAEA.

“We are now well into the second year of facing the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19. The IAEA has risen to the moment, proving yet again its indispensable value by utilizing nuclear and nuclear-driven techniques to provide critical support to Member States in tackling this devastating pandemic.

“At the same time, the IAEA continues to serve as the bulwark against the proliferation of nuclear weapons — the only weapons with the potential to end humanity. The Agency helps to guard against the misuse of nuclear power and nuclear weapons through its indispensable safeguards agreements and additional protocols. I call on all States to ratify and fully implement them.

“Despite numerous challenges, the Agency has striven to verify and monitor the implementation of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. In addition, the Agency continues to monitor the nuclear programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea using available sources despite the continued lack of access.

“I also deeply value the IAEA’s continued leadership in ensuring the safety and security of nuclear and radiation facilities, including through its support to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540.

“Beyond these areas, the IAEA is making an increasingly diverse contribution to advancing global priorities.

“In addition to its robust response to COVID-19, the IAEA has assisted more than 140 countries and territories, including many least developed countries, through its technical cooperation programme. Through its initiatives in areas such as health, nutrition, food, agriculture and climate change, the IAEA makes an important and concrete contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“I look forward to strengthening the valuable cooperation between the IAEA and the United Nations, and in this spirit I wish you all success.”

### **4. Statement by the Director General**

39. The DIRECTOR GENERAL recalled that the conference room had been significantly emptier when he had addressed the General Conference in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the change in circumstances was a sign of hope, the world was still not out of the woods. As part of its continuing efforts to confront and defeat the challenge of the pandemic for all of humanity, the Agency had provided RT–PCR kits to over 140 countries around the world. Through its ZODIAC initiative, the

Agency would work with its sister organizations, such as the FAO, WHO and OIE, and in close cooperation with Member States, to prevent future pandemics. In that connection, he welcomed Samoa as the 173rd State of an ever-growing family of nations working to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, noting that current circumstances served as a reminder of the importance of multilateral action in resolving problems.

40. As and when needed, the Agency was a rapid reaction force for good — be it in the aftermath of the explosion at the Port of Beirut or the earthquake in Haiti or in response to the urgent call from the Andean countries shortly before the current session. In the coming year, the Agency would further pursue such efforts in its determination to show that many solutions to pressing problems could be found through the beneficial application of nuclear science and technology. In so doing, however, it would need the support of its Member States.

41. The Agency would continue working to discharge its primary mission of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons — the deadliest of all weapons created by humankind. Despite the pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, the Agency had honoured its commitment to continue inspecting facilities around the world, thereby ensuring through its inspectors that there was no risk of proliferation.

42. The Agency would also continue its important work with Iran. Following his recent trip to Tehran and the Iranian Vice-President's visit to Vienna, both parties had agreed to work together for solutions. He hoped to return to Iran in the near future to address the pressing matters relating to the Iranian nuclear programme in order to provide necessary assurances to the world and pave the way for further diplomatic efforts towards a satisfactory outcome.

43. As to the DPRK, its nuclear programme was continuing unabated, in clear contravention of several UN Security Council resolutions. The Agency stood ready to resume its activities in that country once all stakeholders had found a political solution and a way forward.

44. The Agency's work would also be crucial to addressing the enormous challenge posed by global warming and climate change. With 443 reactors in 32 countries already providing clean energy and a further 51 reactors under construction in 19 countries, nuclear power formed part of the requisite decarbonized energy mix. The Agency would continue to promote the safe, secure and non-proliferation-oriented use of nuclear energy — a topic that would be considered at the upcoming 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow — and support all countries wishing to benefit from the peaceful uses of that energy. Although the most recent IPCC report was a 'code red for humanity', global decarbonization by 2050 was possible and would be much easier to achieve with nuclear energy.

45. Nuclear safety and security would remain central to the Agency's activities. The more nuclear material that was transferred into the hands of nuclear energy operators, the more nuclear security was of the essence. He therefore invited Member States to participate in the 2021 Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the CPPNM. The Agency was making progress in the area of nuclear safety, including in its work with Japan and internationally recognized experts concerning the treatment and disposal of water from the Fukushima Daiichi NPP.

46. A legal framework was essential to ensuring that Agency inspectors and scientists followed the same rules, irrespective of where they worked. The Agency would therefore be hosting in 2022 the First International Conference on Nuclear Law: The Global Debate, a milestone event that would allow it to consider the legal aspects of its work, explore new challenges and continue to forge consensus to enable progress.

47. It should not be forgotten that many, including women, had for decades suffered a profound injustice in being denied their role in society, let alone in the nuclear sphere. The Agency was working to achieve gender parity in the Secretariat and to lay the groundwork for the participation of women and girls in the nuclear field through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, established in memory of a woman who had won two Nobel Prizes at a time when women could neither vote nor have a place at the table. He thanked Member States for their support in that connection.

48. He concluded by declaring that it was the Agency's job to improve lives as best it could, whether as part of the global debate on climate change, through emergency response and clean energy, or through its activities in human health.

## **6. Contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2022** (GC(65)/21)

49. The PRESIDENT, recalling that, on 8 June 2021, the Board had recommended a figure of €91 075 000 as the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF for 2022, drew attention to the table in document GC(65)/21 showing the contribution that each Member State would need to make in order to meet its share of that target.

50. The early pledging and payment of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's TC programmes. All delegations in a position to do so were urged to notify the Secretariat during the current session of the contributions that their Governments would be making for 2022. He was pleased to note that 25 Member States had already made their pledges to the TCF for 2022.

51. He would provide an update at the end of the session on the contributions pledged and hoped to be able to report favourably on the percentage of the 2022 target figure already pledged.

## **7. General debate and Annual Report for 2020** (G65(5)/5)

52. Mr HERNÁNDEZ ALVARADO (Honduras) thanked the Director General and recognized the Agency's valuable work of contributing to peace and security through the peaceful use of nuclear applications, which Member States were pursuing as a means of addressing some of their development challenges. The Agency's work also contributed significantly to the attainment of the SDGs, thereby having a direct impact on the lives of millions.

53. Honduras thanked the Agency for its continued support to the country under the TC programme, which had helped to strengthen national capacities and human resources for the safe use of nuclear technology, especially in health, agriculture, isotope hydrology and radiation safety. The Agency's cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic and its support following hurricanes Eta and Iota had contributed substantially towards strengthening the country's institutional capacities, in particular for helping those most in need.

54. The Agency was an important partner for his country; thanks to its support, Honduras had strengthened cancer care capacities in some of its hospitals, increased the number of specialists trained

in the use of nuclear technology and medicine, and was poised to open its first nuclear medicine ward in a public hospital.

55. His country's progress in the application of nuclear energy and technology for development would undoubtedly help it to resolve long-standing issues, in particular those relating to climate change effects. Honduras also expected to make progress in the context of the NUTEC Plastics initiative and the great deal of work ahead of it to protect marine biodiversity, which was a tourist attraction and one of the country's greatest riches.

56. Honduras would continue to implement nuclear technology within the framework of the TC programme in strict compliance with international standards, adhering to the safeguards programme as a guarantee that its use of nuclear technology was for peaceful purposes and development.

57. His country was committed to participating in regional programmes and coordinating action among public and private actors, academia and regional bodies, such as the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

58. Lastly, against the backdrop of the pandemic, which had transformed the Agency's working environment and posed an enormous challenge for development, it was important to continue strengthening cooperation with the Agency, as mandated by SDG 17, in order to carry on serving the most vulnerable and seek joint solutions to global challenges, with no one left behind.

59. Ms RAMÍREZ (Colombia) reiterated her country's support for the Agency's central role in maintaining international peace and security through the verification and promotion of nuclear safety and the furtherance of technical cooperation. Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening multilateral mechanisms and forums that championed the common principles of disarmament and non-proliferation as a means of fostering and upholding international peace. It was also necessary to strengthen cooperation mechanisms, pursue mutual confidence-building measures and ensure continuity of the Agency's verification and monitoring activities around the world.

60. Colombia thanked the Agency for its efforts to assist all countries in adopting effective measures and strengthening their national COVID-19 detection capabilities. It was grateful for the support provided to it by the Agency, which had delivered PCR and other equipment, together with reagents. Stressing the importance it attached to the Agency's continuation of its cooperation, R&D and technical assistance projects and activities, her country would especially welcome the Agency's support and cooperation in its work of researching and applying innovative technologies for monitoring marine pollution, in particular plastic and microplastic pollution.

61. Her country was grateful for the technical assistance and X-ray machine equipment provided to help it deal with the catastrophic consequences of hurricane Iota in the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina. As part of its cooperation with the Agency, moreover, Colombia had embarked on the second phase of the project to secure nine disused highly radioactive sources, thereby demonstrating its commitment to nuclear safety. As a party to ARCAL, Colombia would also be participating in 15 regional TC projects during the 2020–2021 cycle.

62. Thanking the Director General for his statement to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Andean Community at its meeting on 3 September 2021, Colombia emphasized its interest in the Agency's support for research into the control, prevention and eradication of the *Fusarium* TR4 fungus. Efforts should be focused on preserving the development potential of the banana industry, which was a key source of income for many families in the region.

63. The inclusion of women in programmes for disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be a priority and a commitment for all States. Her Government was pleased by the continued progress made in such initiatives as the Women in Nuclear Colombia chapter, which fostered

women's equal participation in nuclear science and technology, empowering them and promoting their contribution in that field through the development of technical, scientific and managerial skills.

64. In closing, she reiterated Colombia's commitment to the Agency, to the work of the Director General and to the need to strengthen forums that allowed for consensus-building aimed at resolving common problems and, above all, at promoting the highest levels of social well-being.

65. Mr ESLAMI (Islamic Republic of Iran), expressing his pleasure at joining the sixty-fifth regular session of the General Conference as the new head of the AEOI, said that the inevitable increase in energy demand associated with sustainable development had thrown up challenges that led to a dire need for collective international action.

66. Under its Statute, the Agency was mandated to assist Member States, without discrimination, in developing the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was also required to strengthen technical cooperation with due consideration for Member States' needs and priorities and to help them achieve the SDGs through the sharing of knowledge and experiences, and through the transfer of technology and equipment, without discrimination and political objective.

67. The JCPOA, which had been concluded to remove the impediments to Iran's progress, was a clear example of his country's goodwill, but had been violated by the USA in full disregard of that fact. Through its unilateral policies, moreover, the USA had also violated the provisions of the JCPOA and UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and withdrawn from the deal. The so-called 'maximum pressure' policy was doomed to fail; the US Administration should abandon its addiction to unilateral sanctions and respect international law.

68. On 2 December 2020, after some two and a half years of the USA's continued stepping up of economic sanctions against not only Iran but also countries dealing with Iran, and in the absence of any practical action by the E3 or EU to meet their commitments, the Iranian parliament had passed a law requiring the Government to halt the implementation of all verification and monitoring activities beyond Iran's CSA if JCPOA participants remained non-compliant once the law had been in force for two months.

69. It was time for the USA to rectify its erroneous policies, starting with the removal of all sanctions in a practical, effective and verifiable manner. The President of Iran had clearly expressed his Government's wish for results-oriented negotiations aimed at lifting the unjust pressures and sanctions imposed on the country. Iran had always cooperated with the Agency, which should avoid politicization and maintain its independence, impartiality and professionalism.

70. As set out in several decisions and resolutions approved by the General Conference, any attack on nuclear installations used for peaceful purposes was contrary to international law. All armed attacks against such installations should be explicitly prohibited. Regrettably, the inaction of the UN and the Agency in dealing with terrorist acts against peaceful nuclear facilities had emboldened perpetrators to continue their actions and reject even the most basic principles of international law and the UN Charter. Iran was a party to the NPT and to a safeguards agreement thereunder and would comply with the provisions of both.

71. Nuclear safety had always been a priority for Iran, which had consistently observed nuclear safety requirements. Iran looked forward to a day when the motto of 'peaceful nuclear energy for all and nuclear weapons for none' was universally recognized and acted upon. In that event, the contribution of atomic energy to world peace, health and prosperity would be accelerated and enlarged.

72. Iran was a cradle of civilization and a peace-loving country that had historically contributed to global science and technology. It was therefore determined to pursue its nuclear programme, which was exclusively for peaceful purposes. As stated by the Iranian President during the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization summit on 17 September 2021, nothing could halt Iranian peaceful nuclear activities, which would be conducted within the framework of international rules and regulations.

73. Mr LOGAR (Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the EU, said that Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with his statement.

74. Attaching great importance to whole of the Agency's mandate — nuclear safeguards, safety and security, nuclear energy and technical cooperation — the EU advocated a predictable, sustainable and affordable Agency budget to meet Member States' needs without over-reliance on voluntary funding.

75. The EU encouraged the Secretariat to increase the representation of women and to mainstream gender aspects in programmes and projects. It also welcomed the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, to which it had contributed.

76. The EU reiterated its firm support for the full, complete and effective implementation of the NPT and for its universalization. With proliferation crises continuing to threaten international and regional peace and security, it was essential to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions.

77. The EU reaffirmed its resolute commitment to, and continued support for, the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA. Iran's continued actions were a source of grave concern; they were inconsistent with the JCPOA and, in the case of R&D activities, had irreversible proliferation implications. Iran should promptly return to full implementation of its JCPOA commitments, including all transparency measures, and cooperate in full with the Agency, without any further delay or any conditionality, in order to resolve all pending safeguards issues. The EU supported the intensive diplomatic efforts within the Joint Commission and the contacts made by the EU High Representative — as JCPOA Coordinator — with all relevant partners, with the aim of bringing all sides back to full JCPOA implementation. Iran should return to the negotiations in Vienna at the earliest possible opportunity.

78. The EU remained deeply concerned by the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and urged complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. The EU expected the General Conference to send a firm message to the DPRK regarding the need to comply with its obligations under numerous UN Security Council resolutions.

79. The EU reaffirmed its full support for the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

80. Together with an additional protocol, CSAs were the current verification standard, prompting the EU to call for their universalization without delay. States that had yet to amend their SQPs or apply their CSAs in full, especially those already engaged in building an NPP or research reactor, were urged to take that step. The EU strongly supported SLAs.

81. The EU attached the utmost importance to nuclear safety. With a budget of €300 million for 2021–2027, the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation would promote safety standards worldwide. So-called stress tests would also continue.

82. The EU welcomed the growing number of Contracting Parties to the CNS and the Joint Convention, both of which remained a priority, and encouraged all Member States to join that number.

83. The EU underlined the need to foster international cooperation on all aspects of advanced nuclear technologies, especially safety standards for SMRs, and to continue strengthening nuclear security. It highlighted the universalization of the amended CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, calling on all States to fully implement the provisions of both instruments.

84. The EU strongly supported the Agency's central role in international cooperation and technical assistance. It remained a major donor to the NSF, with almost €60 million committed for 2005–2023. The EU encouraged further coordination among donors and the efficient use of funds.

85. As the second largest contributor to the TC programme, the EU supported the Agency in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The Agency must deliver results if the SDGs and the Paris commitments were to be attained.

86. The EU acknowledged the role played by nuclear technologies in global efforts to limit climate change and mitigate its negative effects and, including in the context of COP26, the Agency's contribution to the discussion of the subject.

87. Noting the importance of the work carried out by the Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf, the EU strongly supported the Agency's activities to develop nuclear technologies and their applications for the achievement of the SDGs and looked forward to the implementation of the ZODIAC initiative.

88. Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman AL-SAUD (Saudi Arabia) said that the General Conference reflected the Agency's important role in promoting international cooperation towards the goal of harnessing the atom for peace and development. His country appreciated Member States' support for the Agency's efforts during the pandemic and the Secretariat's outstanding work on developing the Agency's technical capabilities to provide enhanced technical assistance and capacity building programmes in nuclear technology and regulation.

89. Committed to the highest standards of transparency, reliability and safety in its development of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, Saudi Arabia was working on a national nuclear energy project in close cooperation with the Agency and valued the technical and advisory services provided in that context.

90. Saudi Arabia welcomed the start of work on the construction of a nuclear security training and demonstration centre at the Seibersdorf laboratories, towards which it had contributed US \$10 million. The centre would support the Agency's pivotal role in the international nuclear security system, complementing and enhancing capabilities.

91. States must comply with the NPT while maintaining their right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and utilize their natural resources in a safe environment free of nuclear threat. Calling on the international community to realize the provisions of the NPT by achieving the ultimate goal of complete global nuclear disarmament, Saudi Arabia urged all non-parties to accede to the Treaty without delay and to place all their nuclear facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. WMD-free zones were vital to creating a safe world, spreading peace and strengthening the non-proliferation regime in the Middle East and beyond.

92. Saudi Arabia commended the Director General for maintaining the Agency's neutrality and safeguards responsibilities and appreciated the Agency's continued submission of reports to the Board of Governors concerning Iran's insincerity with respect to safeguards issues. Iran's total non-compliance with its safeguards agreement and its lack of transparency with the Agency posed a threat to the non-proliferation regime. Saudi Arabia supported all international efforts to prevent Iran from possessing nuclear weapons and to advance the non-proliferation regime worldwide.

93. Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East must be resisted; the Israeli nuclear threat, which jeopardized security and stability not only in the Middle East but also across the entire world, must be addressed. It was therefore crucial to implement fully the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East by creating a NWFZ in the region.

94. Renewing its support for the Agency with a view to harnessing nuclear technology for humanity, Saudi Arabia lastly called on the international community to cooperate constructively in nuclear technology development and firmly oppose any attempt to use nuclear energy non-peacefully or unsafely.

95. Mr LIKHACHEV (Russian Federation), expressing confidence that, despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the current session of the General Conference would be effective and efficient, said that it was important for the Agency to continue to carry out its statutory tasks notwithstanding those difficulties.

96. Safeguards were in place to verify that nuclear material was being used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Agency was supporting States in developing national nuclear infrastructure, and the regulatory framework for the safe and sustainable development of the peaceful atom continued to evolve.

97. The Russian Federation would continue to provide expert and financial assistance to the Secretariat for all main areas of its activities. It fully supported the Director General's initiative to launch a new Agency-wide platform on SMRs and stood ready to host an international conference on SMR technology, which it considered to be the next logical step.

98. The development of small-scale power generation was a priority for the Russian Federation. The world's only floating NPP was already successfully operating in Chukotka with two low-power reactors, and a further four upgraded floating power units were planned for construction. In the Republic of Sakha, a nuclear power station was being built based on the RITM-200N reactor.

99. The relevance of nuclear power in the 21st century had been convincingly demonstrated in recent years. In 2020, his country had generated a total of 216 billion kWh of nuclear electricity, surpassing the record set by the USSR in 1988. Furthermore, another reactor unit at the Leningrad NPP, the fourth Generation III+ unit in the Russian Federation, had begun commercial operation in March 2021.

100. The Russian Federation continued to promote the development of nuclear power in its partner countries, focusing on their long-term and sustainable development. In March 2021, work had started on the third unit of the Akkuyu NPP in Turkey. In May 2021, construction had begun on the seventh and eighth units of the Tianwan NPP and on the third and fourth units of the Xudabao NPP in China. In June 2021, work had started on Unit 5 of the Kudankulam NPP in India and the first unit of the Belarusian NPP had been put into commercial operation, with construction of the second unit due for completion by the end of 2021. Work was also continuing in Bangladesh, Hungary and Egypt.

101. The Russian Federation had begun the conceptual design for a new technological platform for nuclear power with a closed nuclear fuel cycle, making it possible to increase the fuel supply significantly and resolve issues relating to spent fuel management.

102. In June 2021, the construction of a nuclear reactor unit with a fast neutron reactor had begun in Seversk. For the first time, a fast-reactor NPP and closed nuclear fuel cycle facilities would be built on the same site — a landmark event for the global nuclear power industry. The Director General and other partners had participated in the launch ceremony.

103. Nevertheless, the peaceful uses of atomic energy also encompassed non-power technologies that contributed to achieving the SDGs. The Russian Federation provided interested countries with nuclear science and technology centres; the first and second phases of such a centre in Bolivia would be commissioned later in 2021. Work was continuing on the Multipurpose Fast Research Reactor, which would serve as a basis for the creation of an international knowledge centre for fast reactors under the auspices of the Agency.



104. As a source of low-carbon electricity, nuclear power was an essential tool for combating climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions over the entire life cycle of an NPP were comparable to those of hydro, wind and solar power generation and were considerably lower than those of coal-fired power plants. The scale of nuclear power's contribution to the fight against climate change could not be overestimated. The capacity of NPPs in operation around the world to reduce greenhouse gases was on a par with the absorption capacity of the planet's forests.

105. There was no doubt that modern nuclear power adhered to the principles of sustainable development and provided the economy with a stable source of clean energy. The highest safety standards — enshrined, inter alia, in Agency standards — guaranteed that nuclear facilities had no negative impact on human health and the environment. In 2021, the Russian Federation would enshrine the sustainability of nuclear power in law in its national classification of 'green' projects.

106. The Agency must play a lead role in efforts to consolidate the status of nuclear power as 'green', and the Russian Federation stood ready to provide all necessary support in that regard. It was already implementing specific projects to reduce emissions in various sectors of the economy using nuclear technologies and would cooperate closely with all interested parties, first and foremost under the auspices of the Agency. He concluded by expressing the Russian Federation's sincere interest in stepping up international cooperation to continue the search for effective solutions to the problem of climate change.

107. Mr ZHANG Kejian (China) said that the global development of nuclear energy faced many challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread around the world. Under the Director General's leadership, the Agency had been able to overcome the impact of the pandemic and had faithfully fulfilled its statutory missions. The Agency had actively assisted Member States in the use of nuclear technology to fight the pandemic, combat climate change and prevent and treat zoonotic diseases, in addition to continuing its safeguards activities in Iran, all of which had contributed greatly to global efforts to enhance socioeconomic development and the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

108. China was committed to building a clean and efficient energy system and considered nuclear energy to be an important option in achieving carbon peak and carbon neutrality.

109. There were currently 51 nuclear power reactors in operation and 17 under construction on the Chinese mainland. China had successfully put into commercial operation the first domestic and first overseas Hualong One reactors. The world's first modular HTGR with fourth-generation nuclear power technology had achieved criticality for the first time. In addition to making steady progress with the Guohe One demonstration project, the demonstration fast reactor and multipurpose SMR projects, China had recently put into operation its first high-level liquid waste vitrification facility. China was willing to work with the Agency and other Member States to promote the development of global nuclear energy infrastructure, scientific and technological innovation and personnel training to help achievement of the SDGs.

110. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, China had been using nuclear technology in the sterilization of medical protective equipment, the disposal of medical wastewater and waste, and the disinfection of cold chain food packaging, providing an environmentally friendly and efficient solution for pandemic prevention and control. It had cooperated with the Agency to establish a Collaborating Centre to share its experience of using SIT to control mosquito-borne infectious diseases in developing countries. China supported the ZODIAC initiative and was willing to provide more resources for developing countries to fight the pandemic and meet challenges in such areas as human health and food security.

111. Human society was a community with a shared future. Only through cooperation and mutual assistance could States prevent and mitigate the risks and challenges associated with the development of nuclear energy and achieve the common goal of ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’.

112. Safety must be maintained to ensure the lifeline of nuclear energy. The Agency should continue to promote a nuclear safety culture, safety standards and guidelines. All countries, furthermore, must constantly strengthen their national responsibilities, strictly implement their international obligations and build a strong and lasting line of defence for nuclear safety and security.

113. The application of nuclear technologies should be expanded to support the achievement of the SDGs. Countries with the necessary capabilities should work with the Agency to promote the advantages of nuclear technology and help developing countries resolve such livelihood-related issues as food security, human health and environmental protection.

114. In addition, countries should strengthen collaborative innovation, draw on their respective advantages through international cooperation, promote R&D and technology applications such as SMRs, and properly dispose of radioactive waste.

115. The principles of objectivity and impartiality should be upheld and contentious issues satisfactorily resolved. All parties should continue seeking solutions to the nuclear issues in the Korean Peninsula and Iran through dialogue and consultation. In that regard, the Agency should maintain its professionalism, objectivity and impartiality and continue to play a constructive role.

116. Mr JACQ (France), expressing his country’s support for all States affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had significantly disrupted societies for a second year, congratulated the Director General and the Secretariat for ensuring the continuity of all the Agency’s activities in spite of the health crisis. In that context, France fully supported the Agency’s initiatives in the field of zoonoses prevention, in particular the ZODIAC project. It welcomed the synergies established between ZODIAC and the Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE) initiative, the latter being coordinated among the Tripartite organizations, the World Bank and the Agency, in order to ensure complementarity of work on zoonotic disease prevention.

117. Nuclear power, which played a key role in peacebuilding, was becoming a major asset in the fight against climate change. Achievement of the objectives set by the Paris Agreement required, in particular, a rapid reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels and the development of low-carbon energy production methods, such as renewable energy and nuclear power. Nuclear power was a low-carbon, accessible, reliable, sustainable, flexible and non-intermittent source of energy and was essential to meeting future energy challenges.

118. In 2020, France had renewed its confidence in, and long-term commitment to, nuclear power by making it a permanent part of its energy strategy. With a view to building a diversified and resilient electricity mix, 50% of its energy would, by 2035, be from nuclear power and the rest almost entirely from renewable energies. France was continuing to modernize its nuclear industry through its national recovery plan, with €500 million in investments to support research programmes and the development of the NUWARD SMR. The details of a programme for the construction of new EPR-type NPPs in France were being considered with a view to a decision by 2023. Advances in the field of decarbonized hydrogen were also promising. Given the potential for energy applications far into the future, nuclear fusion remained an important area of investment for France.

119. In the current challenging international context, his country remained fully committed to the non-proliferation regime established by the NPT, a fundamental element of which was the Agency’s safeguards system. France supported the Agency’s work to harmonize SLAs in order to address current proliferation challenges.

120. The DPRK continued to pose a major threat to the international non-proliferation regime and to international peace and security. Its nuclear and ballistic programmes remained active in flagrant violation of international law. France would continue to implement UN Security Council resolutions to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the DPRK.

121. France was determined to preserve the JCPOA, which remained essential for non-proliferation and security. In close cooperation with Germany and the UK, his country was engaged in discussions to return the USA to the agreement and to bring Iran back into full compliance with its nuclear commitments. Those discussions were an opportunity to put a stop to dangerous escalation. France continued its support for the Director General's implementation of safeguards in Iran. That country should resume implementation of the additional protocol and the verification measures provided for in the JCPOA as early as possible and respond promptly, credibly and satisfactorily to all of the Agency's safeguards questions.

122. His country supported the Agency's efforts to promote nuclear safety and security, and especially the universalization of international legal instruments. It would participate actively in the conferences and would chair the International Conference on Challenges Faced by Technical and Scientific Support Organizations (TSOs) in Enhancing Nuclear Safety and Security.

123. Committed to the OSART peer review missions, France attached great importance to the quality of the work performed by the Agency's teams and wished to maintain the practice of hosting an annual mission on its territory.

124. Lastly, France welcomed the Agency's organization of events in 2022 in which his country would participate, such as the First International Conference on Nuclear Law and the International Conference on Nuclear Knowledge Management and Human Resources Development: Challenges and Opportunities, which, in the same way as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, would help to promote the appeal of careers in the nuclear field at a time when skills renewal was a major challenge.

125. Ms GRANHOLM (United States of America) read out the following message from President Biden:

"I send my greetings to all who are participating in the 65th IAEA General Conference.

"The IAEA was born in a time of global need and today remains an indispensable multilateral tool. It rests on the conviction that, with international cooperation and partnership, nuclear technologies can contribute to fostering peace, health, prosperity and sustainable development around the globe.

"In the decades since its founding, the IAEA has spurred critical advancements in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Today, we must work together to face a new set of common challenges, including fighting COVID-19, confronting the climate crisis and blunting the existential threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"As we approach the upcoming COP26 Climate Change Conference in the United Kingdom, the IAEA and its Member States must do all that we can to meet the goals set out in the Paris Agreement and reach net zero emissions by 2050. That includes the exploration of nuclear energy as part of our energy mix.

"Achieving our goals also requires international cooperation to advance the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards. I urge all countries to adopt the additional protocol as a universal non-proliferation standard.

“To that end, the United States continues to seek a mutual return to compliance with the Iran nuclear deal, and the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And we invite all of you to join us in demonstrating a shared, enduring commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at its upcoming Review Conference.

“On behalf of the United States, I wish all of you a productive IAEA General Conference.”

126. She added that, as President Biden had noted, with humanity at code red it was imperative to address climate change. The peaceful use of nuclear technology was essential to confronting the current crisis. For too long, the conversation around climate change had been wrongly framed as a choice between prosperity or austerity. It was clear, however, that transitioning to a net zero economy represented a great economic opportunity, specifically a global clean energy market that would grow to at least US \$23 trillion by 2030.

127. Advanced nuclear energy was poised to play a critical part in that regard and was among the important reasons for her country’s commitment to nuclear innovation. Furthermore, the USA had the technology and policy solutions for sustainably developing zero-carbon nuclear energy, strengthening nuclear and radiological safety and security, and improving global health outcomes — all at the same time.

128. The Biden Administration’s goal was to reduce carbon emissions by up to 52% by 2030, achieve 100% clean electricity by 2035, make historic investments in climate action and harness the full potential of clean energy. Under that Administration, moreover, the USA had contributed more broadly to peaceful nuclear use through its donation to PACT; its investment in training and capacity building to help Member States to meet their standards obligations and ensure that nuclear material was used solely for peaceful purposes; its support for NUTEC Plastics; its work with international partners to develop next generation advanced nuclear power technology; and its investment in the creation of training courses and workshops focused on security for those new technologies. The USA was eager to do more, especially with its partners by its side.

129. She concluded by urging Member States to join together in order to reframe the dialogue on nuclear energy, make progress in the struggle against climate change and build the safe, secure and clean energy future that was within reach.

**The meeting rose at 12 noon**