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President: Mr FACETTI (Paraguay)

Contents

Item of the agenda ²	Paragraphs
7	General debate and Annual Report for 2020 (<i>continued</i>)
	1–86
	Statements by the delegates of:
	Indonesia
	1–3
	Japan
	4–12
	Bangladesh
	13–18
	San Marino
	19–23
	Estonia
	24–31
	Philippines
	32–28
	Norway
	39–47
	Belarus
	48–54
	Zimbabwe
	55–62

¹ In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference decided that delegations so wishing could attend in a virtual manner using the Interprefy IT platform or make their statements by means of a pre-recorded video.

² GC(65)/25

Contents (continued)

	Paragraphs
Peru	62–71
Spain	72–78
Islamic Republic of Iran (right of reply)	80–83
Russian Federation (right of reply)	84–86

Abbreviations used in this record

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HEU	high enriched uranium
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
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
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
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2020 (continued) (GC(65)/5)

1. Ms MARSUDI (Indonesia) said that the ever-present spectre of global nuclear proliferation was deeply troubling, especially in the light of the ongoing nuclear arms race and heightening tensions between nuclear-weapon States. Against that backdrop, it was easy to forget that nuclear energy could be a powerful ally in creating a better future for humankind. To achieve that ambition would require renewed confidence in nuclear safety, security and safeguards, areas in which the Agency played a central role in supporting Member States to fulfil their obligations and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

2. The Agency performed an equally instrumental role in assisting developing countries to deploy nuclear science and technologies through inclusive technical cooperation, which her country, as a major beneficiary, was committed to supporting, including by way of South–South cooperation. Since 2013, Indonesia had collaborated with the Joint FAO/IAEA Division — currently Centre — of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture to develop 23 new rice varieties. In that context, it had been honoured to receive an Outstanding Achievement Award in plant mutation breeding, which stood as a testament to the socioeconomic impact of such collaboration and to the contribution of nuclear energy to sustainable development.

3. When used for peaceful purposes, nuclear energy had unlimited potential to address urgent global challenges. Nuclear technology had shown its worth in the current pandemic and could be used to detect new infectious diseases and prevent future pandemics. Member States should continue collectively to fulfil the Agency’s objective of seeking to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, as required under its Statute. It was time to bring out the human side of nuclear energy.

4. Mr INOUE (Japan), conveying his country’s highest respect to the Director General for his strong leadership of the Agency in its swift response to international challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, said that the Agency had enhanced the capabilities of Member States to prevent, detect and respond to zoonotic disease outbreaks. Japan had contributed some €11 million to the Agency’s efforts in that context, including through the ZODIAC initiative.

5. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy were a cornerstone of global socioeconomic growth and furthered the achievement of the SDGs. A strong supporter of the TC programme and the PUI, Japan had contributed €1 million to the NUTEC Plastics project and a further €1 million to the ReNuAL 2 project in Seibersdorf .

6. Alive to the positive impact of gender parity on non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Japan would continue to cooperate with and support the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme to encourage women to pursue a professional career in nuclear science and technology.

7. Having marked the tenth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2021, his country noted the expert meeting to be held in November 2021 with the aim of further enhancing nuclear safety. Japan was continuing to decommission its Fukushima Daiichi NPP and carry out reconstruction work in Fukushima Prefecture, with the Agency conducting peer review missions throughout the process. In April 2021, his Government had announced a two-year basic policy for the discharge of ALPS-treated water into the sea in strict accordance with all safety measures. As reflected in the

Agency's positive review report, the basic policy would facilitate the implementation of the entire decommissioning plan.

8. Japan attached great importance to its cooperation with the Agency, with which it had signed the terms of reference, in July 2021, for the handling of ALPS-treated water. At their meeting in Vienna, in August 2021, the country's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Director General had agreed that, as requested by Japan, the Agency would conduct reviews on the safety and regulatory aspects of handling ALPS-treated water discharge and carry out marine monitoring. Japan would continue to update the international community on the situation at the NPP in a transparent and objective manner and cooperate with the Agency in implementing the reviews.

9. Japan strongly supported the Agency's efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its safeguards system, which was fundamental to ensuring non-proliferation,

10. With respect to the DPRK's nuclear programme, his country had been closely monitoring developments, including those outlined in the Director General's recent report³ on the subject. Favouring the resumption of USA–DPRK dialogue, Japan called for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all WMDs and ballistic missiles of all ranges by the DPRK, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, which all States must implement in full. In the knowledge that verification was an essential prerequisite for denuclearization, Japan highly appreciated the Secretariat's work to enhance the Agency's ability and readiness to verify the DPRK's nuclear programme.

11. Supportive of ongoing constructive dialogue on the JCPOA, Japan expected the new Iranian Government to work for an immediate return to compliance with the Plan, which was a factor in strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. Japan once again strongly urged Iran to refrain from provocative actions that undermined the plan. In August 2021, it had called on high-ranking officials in Iran to take constructive measures towards swift compliance with the JCPOA. Japan also urged Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency on all safeguarding issues without delay.

12. Lastly, Japan would spare no effort to achieve a successful outcome at the upcoming Tenth NPT Review Conference while the Agency, for its part, must play an increasingly important role in maintaining and strengthening the NPT — the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

13. Mr OSMAN (Bangladesh), expressing his country's sincere condolences for the loss of life in many Member States due to the COVID-19 pandemic, commended the Agency for continuing its important work, under the able leadership of the Director General, in such difficult times. Through the ZODIAC project, the Agency had provided valuable assistance to Member States in their efforts to fight the pandemic.

14. Bangladesh was implementing the country's Vision 2041, a bold and ambitious plan for its transformation into a developed nation, and was firmly committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in conformity with all necessary safety, security and safeguards measures, as a safe, environmentally friendly and economically viable source of electricity generation. Construction work which had begun at the Rooppur NPP's Unit 1 on 30 November 2017 and at its Unit 2 on 14 July 2018, was continuing, despite the pandemic, in strict compliance with safety protocols. Such construction marked a milestone in the development of his country's nuclear programme and would be bolstered by the addition of a reactor pressure vessel at Unit 1, which Bangladesh had started installing on 14 September 2021.

³ GC(65)/22

15. Supported by the Government's transparent nuclear policy and the tremendous efforts of national stakeholders, bilateral partners and the Agency, Bangladesh was successfully implementing its nuclear energy programme, which it hoped would serve as an example to embarking countries.

16. In developing its nuclear infrastructure, Bangladesh had followed the Agency's Milestones approach, receiving several peer review missions and acceding to all international conventions on nuclear safety, security and safeguards. It was also greatly benefiting from technical cooperation in that area, having signed a CPF with the Agency.

17. As an embarking country, Bangladesh was working closely with the Agency on its NPP. It had also concluded an Integrated Work Plan based on the findings of the INIR missions through which the Agency had provided assistance in human resources and infrastructure development since 2013.

18. Thanks to the TC programme, Bangladesh had achieved socioeconomic development in health, agriculture and the environment and looked forward to the Agency's continued support in various sectors. Bangladesh reaffirmed its own strong support for the Agency's mandate and activities, which were aimed at creating a better world through the peaceful use of nuclear power.

19. Mr BECCARI (San Marino) said that his country was grateful for the Agency's generous support during the COVID-19 pandemic and assured the Agency of its full backing and cooperation. The continued impact of the pandemic served only to highlight the importance of the Agency's assistance, in which regard he commended the Director General and his staff on their promptness and efficiency.

20. The Agency also deserved praise for its work in enhancing nuclear safety and security and in developing peaceful nuclear applications in cancer research, human and animal health, and agriculture, all of which contributed to the well-being of humanity. For 2022, San Marino was pledging a small but significant contribution to the TCF, a mechanism that merited the attention of all Member States and enjoyed his country's full support.

21. San Marino highly valued the activities conducted at the Seibersdorf laboratories, including those under the ZODIAC project. As outbreaks of disease became more frequent, it was important to enhance preparedness for future crises.

22. As the safeguards system was fundamental to international security, San Marino called on all Member States to allow the Agency to conduct its safeguards inspections and to support other States to adhere to their safeguards agreements.

23. Reiterating his country's consternation at the lack of transparency displayed by some States, he urged the States concerned to comply with their commitments. A global order based on peace and free of WMDs could be achieved through greater emphasis on education, cooperation, dialogue, negotiation and trust.

24. Mr MÖLDER (Estonia), commending the Director General on the prompt action taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis, welcomed the Agency's decision to devote the Scientific Forum in 2021 to a discussion of the role of nuclear science in preparing for zoonotic outbreaks.

25. Climate change was another challenge and one that had implications for multilateral action and regional stability. Estonia was strongly committed to transitioning to green energy sources and reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. In April 2021, his Government had established a national working group to consider the possibility of domestic nuclear power generation beyond 2030, with a particular focus on emerging nuclear technologies. Cooperation with the Agency, relevant stakeholders and neighbouring countries was essential to transparent and informed decision making.

26. Effective responses to global challenges such as climate change and environmental disasters called for globally comparable, accessible and interoperable data. In March 2019, at the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, several countries had agreed to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025. In support of that strategy, Estonia had announced a new initiative — the Data for the Environment Alliance — that would bring together State and non-State actors to share environmental data and digital solutions and improve data management worldwide. He invited all Member States to join the alliance and collaborate actively with its members.

27. The Agency played a valuable role in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security framework and assisting States in nuclear capacity building. Through the Agency's TC programme, Estonia had gained valuable knowledge and expertise, including in medicine, industry and education.

28. His country appreciated and supported the Agency's new ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastics initiatives, which would bring benefits to Member States.

29. Estonia was aiming to build a radioactive waste disposal facility by 2040. In early September 2021, it had welcomed an expert mission by the Agency, which had set out a road map for the country's radioactive waste management and provided valuable advice on the long-term management of such waste.

30. The Agency was instrumental to ensuring that nuclear material and technology were reserved for peaceful uses. Estonia therefore supported the universalization of the NPT and underscored the role of the Agency's safeguards system.

31. At the present crucial time, Estonia continued to support the JCPOA and the Agency's long-term mission of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments.

32. Mr DE LA PEÑA (Philippines) noted that developing countries were disproportionately affected by the devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nuclear science and technology offered solutions, not only for detecting, monitoring and responding to the disease and preventing future outbreaks but also for enabling the global economic recovery by supporting industries, enhancing natural resources management, promoting global health, strengthening food security and providing clean energy sources. The Philippines remained grateful to the Agency and its non-traditional donors for their assistance during the pandemic, which had enabled it to apply nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques for the detection and diagnosis of COVID-19.

33. With respect to the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, the Philippines set great store by the Agency's R&D activities under the TC programme, in line with its national development goals and the SDGs, and was grateful for the Agency's support in key areas. The re-establishment of the Philippine Research Reactor as a TRIGA fuel subcritical assembly had supported training and research activities in reactor physics and engineering. The uninterrupted operation of its electron beam facility had enabled the country to apply ionizing radiation in various sectors — including radiation grafting for wastewater treatment — and had expanded its national expertise. The Philippines had applied isotopic techniques to ensure food safety and security and clean water, promote infant and child nutrition, and conduct ultratrace analyses of radionuclides in coral cores to reconstruct the input history of nuclear activities.

34. The Philippines appreciated the Agency's comprehensive assistance to Member States embarking on or expanding their nuclear power programmes, in line with the Milestones approach. His country's Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee continued to study the possibility of establishing a national nuclear energy programme following the recommendations of an INIR mission in 2018 and the development of an Integrated Work Plan in 2019.

35. The Philippines was pleased to participate in ZODIAC and to be one of three Member States chosen to pilot implementation of NUTEC Plastics in the Asia Pacific Region. He commended the Director General's identification of peaceful nuclear solutions to the most pressing global challenges.

36. The Agency's safeguards and verification function was the heart of the global nuclear non-proliferation agenda, providing the international community with assurances that all nuclear material remained in peaceful uses. The Philippines held the principled position that the world should be free of nuclear weapons and that their total elimination was the only absolute guarantee against their use or the threat of their use. In that context, he noted the forthcoming NPT Review Conference and the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW in 2022.

37. The Philippines was grateful for the Agency's continued assistance to Member States in nuclear safety and security, including through guidance documents, peer review and advisory missions and training activities. He was pleased to announce that his country had ratified the Amendment to the CPPNM, which had entered into force on 16 June 2021, and looked forward to the forthcoming Conference of the Parties in March 2022.

38. Lastly, the Philippines welcomed the significant contributions of female scientists in line with the Agency's statutory objective of accelerating and enlarging the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. He commended and supported the Director General's goal of achieving gender parity in the Secretariat by 2025 and the launch of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

39. Ms SØREIDE (Norway) said that the Agency played a key role in ensuring the implementation of the NPT, which had contributed to global security for over 50 years. Looking forward to the Tenth NPT Review Conference, her country underscored the importance of ensuring the Treaty's continued success and also recognized the right of all NPT States Parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. Norway was consequently pleased to announce that it would contribute up to \$1 million to the PUI.

40. Measures aimed at enhancing nuclear safety and security were for the common good, increasing collective confidence and promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Her country reaffirmed the Agency's role in coordinating international cooperation on nuclear security and welcomed the newly approved Nuclear Security Plan 2022–2025.

41. With HEU minimization and elimination forming a crucial element of the shared efforts to strengthen nuclear security, her country had recently signed an MOU with the USA to advance a cooperative project to eliminate all of its HEU. Furthermore, in line with its Nuclear Action Plan, her Government continued to support safety and security activities and address nuclear legacy issues in partner countries, for which it had allocated more than \$200 million over the previous 25 years.

42. Norway commended the Agency's efforts to promote the universalization of the CPPNM and its Amendment ahead of the Review Conference in 2022. Her country highly appreciated the Agency's dedication, despite the postponement of the Seventh Review Meeting of the Joint Convention and the Eighth Review Meeting of the CNS. She encouraged all Contracting Parties to ensure continued compliance with their obligations under those conventions.

43. As non-proliferation was the cornerstone of its foreign policy, Norway called on all Member States to comply with the global verification standard by concluding a CSA and signing and ratifying an additional protocol. Her country supported the Agency's State-level safeguards approach, which the Director General was fully mandated to pursue under existing safeguards agreements.

44. With regard to the JCPOA, any action that undermined diplomatic efforts towards its full implementation was deeply regrettable. There should be no room for uncertainty regarding the Agency's

status in relation to Iran's nuclear programme. Iran must follow up its signals of positive intent with tangible actions.

45. The continuation of the DPRK's nuclear programme was an unacceptable violation of international law. Norway therefore appreciated the Agency's readiness to resume its verification activities in the DPRK at short notice.

46. Norway had served as a member of the Board of Governors for two years and commended the Agency on its response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. It also welcomed and had been pleased to support the Director General's initiative to include women in STEM fields.

47. Lastly, her country assured the Agency of its commitment to international cooperation and confidence building in the area of peaceful nuclear activities under the aegis of the Agency. It was vital that all of the Agency's core activities should continue to receive sufficient funding.

48. Mr KARANKEVICH (Belarus), noting with satisfaction that the Agency had promoted nuclear technology in important areas, including power generation, health and food, said that for many countries the development of nuclear technology was a guarantee of energy independence, economic growth and human welfare — to which the Agency's ever-growing membership was testament. In that connection, he congratulated Saint Kitts and Nevis on becoming the newest Member State.

49. Belarus welcomed the Agency's flagship initiatives of combating infectious diseases and plastic pollution through applied nuclear technology and supported its proposed TC programme for the next two-year cycle.

50. His country was in the final stage of building its first NPP. In June 2021, its first power unit had begun commercial operation; the second was due to follow in 2022. Belarus was taking all necessary measures to ensure the highest level of nuclear safety at the plant, working transparently, responsibly and collaboratively with all relevant partners, notably the Agency. 'Safety first' was the plant's watchword. The country's experience bore witness to the tangible and practical benefits of the Agency's activities and instruments for countries that were developing nuclear power. Such work demonstrated that expanding the peaceful uses of the atom improved quality of life and prosperity.

51. Having played host to all of the key Agency missions recommended for countries constructing their first NPP, Belarus had developed the basis of its nuclear energy programme in line with expert recommendations and suggestions and shared its nuclear-related experience and achievements with other States.

52. As a demonstration of its commitment to the physical protection of nuclear material and facilities, Belarus planned to establish a nuclear security training centre, which would strengthen its national nuclear security regime and make a crucial contribution to regional and global security. In implementing that project, his country would be grateful for the Agency's support.

53. A strong and unwavering advocate of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Belarus fully complied with its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement. It supported the Agency's role in safeguards implementation, which must always be based on mutually agreeable approaches and be in strict compliance with international agreements.

54. As in the past, Belarus would pay in full its contribution to the TCF for 2022.

55. Mr ZHEMU (Zimbabwe) said that it was imperative for his country, as it was embarking on a nuclear power programme, to focus on building critical capacities in infrastructure, safety, security and technical expertise. It therefore called on the Agency to continue to expand its fellowship programmes,

especially for female scientists, and to support the integration of nuclear science and technology into the national education system.

56. His country, which had agriculture as the mainstay of its economy, had benefited from a wide range of TC projects. Having experienced extreme and often violent weather patterns over the previous two decades, Zimbabwe had no option but to build its resilience and adapt its agricultural systems. Continued support from the Agency would enable Zimbabwe to develop new high-yielding and highly nutritious seed varieties through mutation breeding, complementing conventional breeding techniques. Furthermore, Agency assistance in applying nuclear technology to the control of animal disease vectors, artificial insemination in livestock, and soil and water management were essential for the country's future development.

57. Welcoming the Agency's PACT initiative, Zimbabwe noted that the continued provision of technical advice, expert training, and equipment and accessories remained critical to its efforts to expand its capacity for applying cutting-edge nuclear technology to cancer diagnosis and treatment.

58. With regard to nuclear safety, his country was pushing ahead with the construction of a radioactive waste repository, which it expected to be fully operational by the end of 2021. Zimbabwe was grateful for the assistance of the Agency's technical staff and experts on that project.

59. Committed to its international obligations under various conventions on nuclear safety, security and safeguards, his country was currently ratifying or acceding to relevant agreements, notably the Joint Convention, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and the CCPNM. In addition, and as a sign of its commitment to the international community, Zimbabwe would be signing its additional protocol during the current regular session of the General Conference.

60. Zimbabwe was preparing its third CPF, for 2022–2026, which would be fully aligned with its five-year medium term national development strategy and contribute to the attainment of key socioeconomic development goals through applied nuclear science and technologies.

61. To conclude, Zimbabwe reaffirmed its commitment to global nuclear safety and security, standing with others in calling for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It was critically important that Member States worked together to address the global challenges confronting them all.

62. Mr MAÚRTUA DE ROMAÑA (Peru), welcoming the Agency's TC activities, said that the Agency played a pivotal role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which had a positive impact on global well-being.

63. With Agency support, Peru had made considerable advances in many areas, including human health: for example, in the diagnosis and treatment of paediatric cancer, the use of hybrid images in nuclear medicine, and child nutrition monitoring. One milestone achieved thanks to its cooperation with the Agency was the establishment of a tissue bank at the National Institute of Child Health, where hundreds of burns patients were treated.

64. Peru attached great importance to the Agency's timely provision of substantial assistance during the pandemic. Among other supplies, the country had received RT–PCR equipment, reagents, personal protective equipment and COVID-19 diagnostic tests, all of which had enhanced its detection capability and reduced the spread of the disease.

65. Peru fully supported both the ZODIAC initiative to prevent future pandemics and the NUTEC initiative to assist Member States in combating the scourge of marine plastic pollution.

66. The Agency had supported projects to strengthen the capabilities of isotope hydrology laboratories in working for the efficient use of water resources in agriculture through improved fertilization practices. Progress had also been made in the area of food safety as a result of using the SIT to combat agricultural pests; applying nuclear techniques to improve potato and coffee yields; and assessing soil erosion and sedimentation in mountainous agricultural catchments.

67. The TC programme ensured that countries most in need benefited from nuclear science and technology, thereby delivering on the Agency's mandate of ensuring 'Atoms for Peace and Development' in all Member States.

68. Two major initiatives would enable Peru to enhance its cooperation with other Member States: the designation of the National Agrarian University La Molina as an IAEA Collaborating Centre for grain treatment to ensure food security; and the designation of the National Training Service for the Construction Industry as a subregional reference centre for the inspection of civilian structures, which would enhance Peru's role in supporting its neighbours in emergency situations.

69. To ensure that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes, Member States must work towards the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. With that in mind, Peru was party to three international treaties — the NPT, the CTBT and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — and was soon to ratify a fourth, namely the TPNW.

70. With regard to the JCPOA, his country urged all participants to return to the negotiations aimed at ensuring its full implementation. Noting with appreciation the Director General's efforts to ensure monitoring in Iran, Peru encouraged Iran to comply with its obligations under the agreement and apply its additional protocol.

71. In closing, he reaffirmed his country's unwavering support for the Agency's multilateral system for promoting peace and international security, international cooperation and respect for human rights and international law, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

72. Mr ALBARES BUENO (Spain) said that events over the previous year had demonstrated that concerted international action was vital to overcoming global challenges. Without the collaboration of all States through multilateral institutions, it would be impossible to maintain peace and international security, promote global health, protect the environment or mitigate the impact of climate change. The Agency's key role in responding to many of those challenges was firmly supported by his country, in line with its multilateral ambitions and especially in view of its recent appointment to the Board of Governors.

73. The maintenance of international peace and security also required a robust nuclear non-proliferation regime. With the NPT Review Conference on the horizon, Spain was working with its partners in the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament with the aim of strengthening the NPT and promoting a successful outcome for the conference.

74. His country maintained its full confidence in the work of the Director General and the Secretariat, above all in verifying Iran's compliance with its legal obligations under the JCPOA and its safeguards agreement. All participants must return to the plan without delay and Iran must comply with all of its commitments and obligations.

75. The latest developments in the DPRK's nuclear programme were deeply worrying. Spain called on the DPRK to abstain from actions that could undermine a return to dialogue and to take credible steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, in line with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

76. The world must be safer but also fairer, with policies guided by the SDGs and underpinned by nuclear technologies: nuclear safety and security were a priority. Spain had therefore developed a national nuclear and radiological safety regime comprising a well-developed institutional structure, well-integrated health and safety systems and an excellent private sector. Its institutions and companies, including the Nuclear Safety Council, the Civil Guard and the Research Centre for Energy, Environment and Technology, supported the Agency in developing international standards, provided technical assistance to Member States and defined and promoted best practice internationally through direct collaboration with the Secretariat and cooperation mechanisms. Examples of the latter included the Ibero-American Forum of Radiation and Nuclear Safety Regulatory Agencies, established some 25 years previously, the cooperation agreement between the Agency and the Civil Guard, and the Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean.

77. Spain continued to promote global health through Agency initiatives such as ZODIAC and PACT.

78. Gender equality was a priority for Spain in both its domestic and foreign policy. Initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, aimed at increasing women's access to scientific and technical subjects, were essential in ensuring tangible and decisive progress in that direction and deserved the full support of all Member States.

79. Emphasizing that a safer and fairer world for all was achievable only through international cooperation, his country remained committed to the Agency and its multilateral system.

80. Mr ROUZBAHANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said with reference to earlier remarks by the Saudi Arabian delegation concerning the Iranian nuclear programme that, in a bitter irony of international relations, certain Member States were increasingly employing the gambit of the best defence being a good offence. In continuing to implement an SQP based on the former standard text, Saudi Arabia was preventing the Agency from fully discharging its monitoring and verification mandate in respect of that country's nuclear programme.

81. Iran was fully implementing its CSA and firmly believed that any non-compliance with comprehensive safeguards, whether by Saudi Arabia or by the Israeli regime, should sound alarm bells and be instantly condemned, without exception. His country, the Agency and the international community would feel more assured if Saudi Arabia, along with all other countries in the Middle East, had committed to the same safeguards obligations as Iran.

82. States that were non-parties to the NPT or that had a special safeguards agreement with the Agency had unfortunately been given carte blanche to avoid implementing their nuclear-related obligations in the full and verifiable manner required to provide assurance of the peaceful nature of their nuclear activities. His country therefore believed that ignoring the realities on the ground in the Middle East no longer served the region's best interests nor satisfied the international community's desire for peace and stability.

83. In truth, Saudi Arabia's failure to implement its CSA in full was depriving the Agency of the continuity of knowledge necessary for the conduct of its verification activities. Saudi Arabia's failure to rescind its current SPQ, in line with the Secretariat's repeated requests, and thereby implement Agency safeguards could allow it to conceal certain nuclear activities not subjected to Agency inspections, which risked undermining the entire safeguards regime.

84. Mr BULYCHEV (Russian Federation), similarly speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation was compelled to respond to the baseless allegations made against his country.

85. The Russian position on whether nuclear facilities in Sevastopol fell under Russian or Ukrainian jurisdiction, as set out in document INFCIRC/876, remained unchanged. The Sevastopol facilities had

featured on the list of his country's nuclear facilities to which Agency safeguards could be applied since Crimea had voted in favour of reunification with the Russian Federation in a democratic referendum held in March 2014. The Russian Federation stood ready to provide the Agency with access, upon request, to those facilities, which were unrelated to safeguards implementation in Ukraine.

86. With regard to the storage of nuclear material beyond those facilities, visits by Agency inspectors to facilities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were a matter for Ukraine to resolve with the Agency. The Russian Federation was not party to the conflict in Donbas. He therefore reiterated its call on Ukraine to engage in direct dialogue with those in control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to resolve the matter of Agency access. It was regrettable that Ukraine was yet again attempting to politicize the Agency's work at the General Conference on the basis of unfounded accusations.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.