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President: Mr HUSSEN (Iraq)

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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.

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Abbreviations used in this record

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
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Espoo Convention	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
IEC	Incident and Emergency Centre
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
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
MW	megawatt
MW(e)	megawatt electrical
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	Nuclear-weapon-free zone
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PMO	Policy-Making Organ
R&D	research and development

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention	Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
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 ELZEIN SOGHAYROUN (Sudan) expressed her country's sincere thanks to the Agency for its continued support in strengthening her country's infrastructure for the peaceful uses of atomic energy and in combating COVID-19, which had helped limit the spread of the disease.

2. In spite of its current difficult situation, Sudan had successfully prepared its fourth CPF, signed in December 2020, covering the period 2021–2027. The national projects for the 2022–2023 cycle focused on: strengthening radiation and nuclear safety infrastructure; improving cancer screening and treatment services by expanding and upgrading the network of state-level radiation therapy and nuclear medicine centres; strengthening food security by producing genetic mutations resistant to plagues and climatic conditions in various regions; and expanding the use of the SIT to control fruit fly and malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

3. A board of national institutions to address the ZODIAC initiative had been set up, and a five-year national plan would be implemented as part of the Agency's regional project, with a view to strengthening the infrastructure of state veterinary research laboratories and the subsidiary laboratories of the National Public Health Laboratory for early diagnosis of diseases, reporting on emerging diseases and implementing emergency containment measures.

4. Setting store by African regional cooperation on R&D and training in nuclear science and technology, her Government stood ready to participate actively in AFRA regional projects and to share expertise and lessons learned to strengthen ties.

5. Commending the Agency's provision of much needed equipment to the national nuclear security support centre, she said that Sudan's Integrated Work Plan for nuclear security was being successfully implemented. Her country highly commended the Agency's role in supporting its Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority through the provision of equipment and experts, which had enabled it to perform regulatory tasks.

6. Authority over the Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority had been moved to the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, giving it complete independence from institutions and ministries related to nuclear and radiation activities. Regulations continued to be approved and a modified SQP had been concluded; an Agency inspection and verification mission had been hosted in September 2021. The national technical committee for nuclear and radiation emergencies continued to coordinate with the authorities on emergency preparedness and response.

7. Mr LETSHOLATHEBE (Botswana) said that States and international organizations alike had learned huge lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the need for global preparedness against similar outbreaks in the future. His country therefore fully supported the Agency's ZODIAC initiative, and welcomed the 2021 Scientific Forum, which would offer experts, including those from Botswana, the opportunity to share research and other experiences of preparing for zoonotic disease outbreaks.

8. As it continued to exploit the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in animal health and production, food security, human health and nutrition to improve the lives of its people, Botswana welcomed the progress of the TC programme at the national level. It would continue to honour its contributions to the TCF, the Working Capital Fund and the Regular Budget in support of Agency activities.

9. Committed to fulfilling its obligations under legally binding international instruments related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Botswana was currently reviewing the Radiation Protection Act to draft a comprehensive nuclear law that also addressed nuclear security. It was grateful to the Agency's Office of Legal Affairs for its assistance.

10. Aiming to develop a knowledge-based economy, Botswana highly appreciated initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the PhD sandwich fellowship programme. His country would continue to encourage its young female professionals to apply.

11. Botswana was building capacity in different sectors of the economy through the AFRA programme. The instrument to accede to the revised AFRA Agreement was ready to be deposited and his country was committed to supporting all efforts to ensure successful implementation, including payment to the AFRA Fund. Botswana urged other countries to accede to the revised programme to enable its smooth implementation.

12. Ms NANKABIRWA SSENTAMU (Uganda) affirmed her Government's commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in compliance with all safety, security and safeguards measures. The Agency's continued technical assistance to Uganda in advancing nuclear science and technology in food security, sustainable agriculture and energy development, human health, and water resources management was therefore highly appreciated.

13. Her Government was prioritizing the energy sector as a primary growth enabler to attain the National Development Plan by 2040 and was preparing for the introduction of nuclear power as part of a diversification strategy to meet future electricity needs for socioeconomic development. Committed to the systematic development of nuclear power infrastructure, Uganda welcomed the INIR mission planned for 2021.

14. Uganda's partnership with the Agency, including through the TC programme, had been beneficial for human resources development and the acquisition of specialized equipment. Uganda commended the Agency's continued assistance to Member States during the pandemic, as shown by the high levels of TC programme implementation.

15. In view of Uganda's nuclear power prospects and a significant increase in nuclear science and technology applications, her Government reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the national nuclear safety, security and safeguards infrastructure. It welcomed the Agency's assistance in developing nuclear legislation and enhancing the nuclear security regime. Noting that development was unsustainable without peace and security, her country appreciated the Agency's pivotal role in enhancing the nuclear security regime and in monitoring and safeguarding nuclear material to ensure that peaceful nuclear endeavours did not result in nuclear terrorism or proliferation.

16. Ms ROSABRUNETTO (Monaco) said that the COVID-19 assistance provided by the Agency to almost 140 Member States demonstrated the relevance of using nuclear technologies to preserve human health, not to mention the Agency's decisive contribution to SDG 3. Furthermore, the ZODIAC initiative had shown that the Agency could adapt to current challenges and underlined the importance of scientific applications. Monaco was therefore pleased that the 2021 Scientific Forum would focus on the role of nuclear science in preparing for zoonotic disease outbreaks.

17. Monaco had long been committed to working with the Agency to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology to protect the environment and human health. The IAEA Environment Laboratories, celebrating their 60th anniversary in 2021, were helping to advance scientific knowledge of the use of nuclear applications to preserve terrestrial and marine environments and to fight the effects of climate change, in particular on oceans. They contributed hugely to achieving SDG 14, on the conservation and sustainable use of the seas and oceans, a matter dear to Prince Albert II, who had long

been personally committed to issues concerning the marine environment, including ocean acidification, microplastics, and global biodiversity. The Agency was therefore encouraged to continue its work in such areas. The forthcoming visit of the Director General would be an opportunity for her country to confirm its commitments.

18. A long-standing supporter of PACT, Monaco recognized the need for increased assistance to women and girls at a time when they were becoming more vulnerable owing to conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges. Monaco had supported the Women's Cancer Partnership Initiative throughout and, in view of the statistics on deaths from breast or uterine cancer, called for sustained efforts to improve cancer treatment.

19. Mr MOHAPINYANE (Lesotho) said that his country remained indebted to the Agency for its unwavering assistance under the TC programme. It was currently implementing five projects in the 2020–2021 TC cycle on nutrition, agriculture, human health and regulatory infrastructure. For the 2022-2023 TC cycle, Lesotho would be implementing two projects aimed at eradicating poverty in the face of climate change and COVID-19.

20. Committed to establishing a regulatory authority in line with the country's Radiation Protection Agency Act 2018, his Government continued to seek guidance from the Agency. It had announced the membership of the regulatory board and noted that the Agency had granted Lesotho the opportunity to participate in scientific visits to enhance the board's capacity.

21. His country was grateful to the Agency for providing real-time PCR equipment and consumables in support of its COVID-19 response. Noting that Lesotho continued to experience cases of COVID-19, rabies and anthrax, he said that the theme of the 2021 Scientific Forum was both timely and appropriate and would encourage intensified efforts to develop capacities for the sound management of zoonotic diseases. Proud of its National Veterinary Laboratory, which had detected outbreaks of zoonotic diseases including avian influenza, Lesotho appreciated the Agency's technical support for R&D under ZODIAC to improve preparedness for responding to zoonotic disease outbreaks.

22. Mr BINDAYNA (Bahrain) said that his country continued to strengthen cooperation with the Agency through the TC programme, which made a significant contribution to the global effort to achieve the SDGs. Bahrain was proud that, through the TC programme, national capacities were increasing in health, the environment, education and, especially, in nuclear safety, security and infrastructure along with preparedness and response for nuclear and radiological emergencies. Bahrain regularly submitted national nuclear safety reports, participated effectively in CNS review processes and supported all the Agency's efforts to universalize the CPPNM.

23. To pave the way for the sustainable, safe and healthy environment that all States in the Middle East sought in the interests of their own people, it was essential to rid the Middle East of WMDs, in particular nuclear weapons, in line with the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and to subject all nuclear installations in the region to Agency monitoring and safeguards.

24. The Agency's significant efforts to monitor Iran's nuclear programme and verify the country's compliance with nuclear safety and security standards were appreciated. It was of great concern that Iran was still not fulfilling its commitments to the Agency, had stopped implementing its obligations and had yet to provide the requested information regarding its nuclear programme. Bahrain called on Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency, especially in relation to enrichment of uranium above the limits required for peaceful uses. Iran should engage seriously in the Vienna talks, respect the privileges and immunities of the Agency's inspectors, and avoid escalation, so as not to jeopardize regional security and stability.

25. Ms MASEA LINARES (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), noting that the impact of the pandemic continued to be experienced nationally and globally, said that cooperation, unity and international collaboration were required to tackle the ensuing challenges and difficulties. The Agency had gone to extraordinary lengths to support countries affected by the pandemic and Venezuela was grateful for the assistance it had received through the donation of X-ray and diagnostic equipment. Implementation of the new ZODIAC initiative would further strengthen the Agency's support.

26. Venezuela was taking a number of steps to use nuclear science and technology for the benefit of its people. It had made progress in updating its inventory of disused radioactive sources and the radiation safety information management system, and in developing national regulations concerning radioactive sources and devices that generated ionizing radiation.

27. Her country continued to implement national TC projects in health, radiation safety and food security and participated in regional projects through ARCAL. Under national projects, it received equipment for inspection activities; the equipment received by the University Hospital of Caracas would help to strengthen national capacity in radiobiology and molecular oncology.

28. As the Agency's technical assistance made a vital contribution to development and prosperity, it should not be subject to political, economic or any other conditions incompatible with the Statute. No country should therefore interfere with the normal functioning of the TC programme of other countries.

29. In a number of forums, Venezuela had denounced the imposition of illegal, illegitimate and immoral unilateral coercive measures taken by one country against others, in violation of the UN Charter and international law. As a result of such illegal, unilateral coercive measures, Venezuela had faced restrictions in the acquisition, installation and maintenance of equipment and supplies required for its TC programme with the Agency.

30. Acknowledging the Agency's work to promote the nuclear technology development and transfer, Venezuela noted the Agency's efforts to establish and promote the highest standards of nuclear safety and radiation protection and to verify that nuclear energy was used for peaceful purposes.

31. Venezuela trusted that the negotiations among JCPOA participants would continue in order to preserve that landmark achievement of diplomacy and multilateralism. Her country hoped that the interest expressed by the new administration of the country that had withdrawn from, and jeopardized, the JCPOA would be sustained over time, that the provisions of the Plan would be respected and the pre-existing conditions would be restored. Her country welcomed the close contact and ongoing collaboration between Iran and the Agency and the Agency's objective and balanced efforts to that end.

32. A pacifist country, Venezuela defended the inalienable right of developing countries to strengthen their technological resource base and acquire the knowledge that would enable them to use peaceful nuclear energy in their development plans and contribute to the well-being of their peoples. Lastly, her country remained a strong supporter of general, complete and irreversible disarmament under strict and effective international control in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

33. Mr KORNELIOU (Cyprus) commended the Agency's efforts to strengthen non-proliferation, international nuclear safety and security, and international cooperation. He also commended the Director General and his staff for their work in difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. His country highly valued the Agency's TC programme for enhancing the responsible development of peaceful nuclear applications and achieving the SDGs. Over the years, Cyprus had co-organized a number of Agency events and would continue to do so. It had benefited greatly from significant Agency assistance in a variety of projects, while the provision of experts and training was greatly appreciated.

35. As a State party to all major international treaties and conventions, Cyprus remained fully committed to their implementation. Although Cyprus did not operate any nuclear power or research reactors or any other nuclear installations, and its energy plans for the foreseeable future did not include nuclear energy, it recognized the importance of the Agency's standards in ensuring nuclear safety and security worldwide. His country was committed to maintaining and further strengthening radiation safety and security, along with emergency preparedness and response, and supported all measures and initiatives that strengthened nuclear safety and security at the national and international levels.

36. Given the potential transboundary impact of a nuclear event, international and regional cooperation was of utmost importance. It was therefore vital to enhance transparency throughout the entire life cycle of a nuclear facility, including through the provision of information to the public, and consultation with neighbouring countries likely to be affected by the release of radioactive material.

37. No Member State should underestimate the risks to nuclear security, given the significant potential for terrorist attacks, natural disasters, loss of control or cyberattacks. Cyprus once again called on all Member States to cooperate across regions and exchange information in a responsible and timely manner.

38. Mr DELLA VEDOVA (Italy), welcoming the Director General's visit to his country in June 2021, said that his Government would continue to support all the Agency's activities, both financially and politically. The Agency's multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective safeguards system, remained a core component of the NPT. Offering fundamental assurances about global security, it was essential in ensuring the peaceful nature of nuclear activities. Italy commended the Agency's efforts to perform its verification mandate under the NPT with the utmost diligence, competence and impartiality.

39. Iran should, in Italy's view, cooperate with the Agency in good faith, consistently and without infringements, and fulfil its safeguards-related commitments completely and unconditionally. Italy remained deeply concerned at the severe difficulties experienced with regard to the JCPOA, a key element of the global non-proliferation architecture and an achievement of multilateral diplomacy; its full implementation was crucial for regional and international security. His country therefore urged Iran to return to full implementation of its obligations under the Plan without delay and to refrain from uranium enrichment activities, stockpiling of nuclear material and further development of technical capabilities. Looking forward to the renewed and full engagement of the USA with the JCPOA, Italy fully supported the prompt resumption of negotiations in Vienna and called on all participants to make every effort to resolve current issues through dialogue.

40. The DPRK's repeated ballistic missile launches undermined regional and international peace and security and were a matter of grave concern. Italy urged the DPRK to refrain from further provocations and to take tangible steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. The Agency must play a key role.

41. All States with, or intending to develop, nuclear power programmes should adhere to the relevant international nuclear safety instruments. As a State party to all the main international conventions on the matter, Italy actively supported the Agency in its efforts to develop standards on every aspect of nuclear safety. Fully committed to improving the international nuclear security environment, his country strongly supported the Agency's central role.

42. Any project involving nuclear energy, and any technology or application making use of radioactive materials, should include safeguards, safety, security, emergency preparedness and response elements. As it highly valued the Agency's TC programme, Italy would make its full contribution of almost €3 million to the TCF for 2022. It had particularly appreciated the Agency's efforts in partnership with Italian experts in the aftermath of the tragic blast in Beirut in August 2020.

43. Lastly, turning to nuclear applications, he said that Italy was proud of its significant contribution to international R&D activities.

44. Mr NAEEM (Pakistan) said that, as a founding member, Pakistan strongly supported the Agency's role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology in accordance with its motto of 'Atoms for Peace and Development'. His country continued to harness nuclear technology and applications in power generation, health, agriculture, industry and environmental protection for socioeconomic progress and achievement of the SDGs. One of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, Pakistan viewed nuclear energy as a reliable, consistent, and carbon-free source of electricity generation. Its sixth and largest 1100 MW(e) power plant had been inaugurated in Karachi in 2021 and another was expected to become operational in April 2022.

45. Pakistan had been one of the leading partners of the Agency's TC programme for a number of years. A project in the field of nuclear power development was currently being implemented and further projects in agriculture, human health and nuclear power had been designed for the 2022–2023 TC cycle. His country offered its expertise in connection with the development of technical documents and Agency missions to other Member States.

46. ZODIAC was timely and strategic and Pakistan looked forward to contributing to its success with the participation of its national laboratories. Supportive of the upgrade of the Agency's Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf, his country would be making another financial contribution to ReNuAL+ and was keen to participate in NUTEC Plastics.

47. His country was offering scholarships at the Pakistan Institute of Energy and Applied Sciences under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. While it fully supported the Agency's objective of achieving gender parity, his country emphasized the importance of equitable geographical representation in the workforce through the recruitment of suitably qualified personnel from developing countries.

48. Pakistan demonstrated its commitment to the safeguards system by placing all its NPPs and research reactors under Agency safeguards. Even during the most challenging days of the COVID-19 pandemic, safeguards measures had been implemented without interruption.

49. Pakistan attached great importance to the Agency's central role in coordinating international efforts to strengthen global nuclear safety and security. Given that nuclear safety and security constituted a national responsibility, his country had developed a comprehensive nuclear safety and security regime, regularly reviewed and updated in line with the Agency's guidance documents and international best practices. Pakistan would be requesting an IPPAS mission in 2022 and had also invited an IRRS follow-up mission that year.

50. The Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security had grown into a regional and international hub and had conducted a number of Agency courses with participation from over 45 Member States. Pakistan looked forward to further strengthening its mutually beneficial cooperation with the Agency and its collaboration with other Member States.

51. Mr BRKIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina), noting with appreciation that the Agency had continued its very effective work in difficult circumstances, thanked the Director General for his professionalism in leading the Agency during such unprecedented and challenging times.

52. Taking a unanimous position regarding the disposal of radioactive waste in the immediate vicinity of the border, his country questioned Croatia's decision to select Trgovska Gora as a preferred location for the disposal of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel from the Krško NPP. The proposed site was close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Una national park and was considered by experts to pose a potential threat to the health of residents in 13 municipalities. Furthermore, the potential

threat of devastating environmental impact and the high-risk of earthquakes justified concerns that the location was not suitable. Fully committed to addressing the matter in accordance with the provisions of the Espoo Convention, his country looked forward to further constructive dialogue with Croatia in the spirit of good neighbourly relations and to substantive engagement in all related activities. Combining the expertise of both countries would be beneficial for resolving the sensitive issue.

53. His country supported ZODIAC, noting the significant role that nuclear science could play in the critical task of preventing zoonotic diseases worldwide. Welcoming the progress made since the initiative's launch in June 2020, it looked forward to its further development. The 2021 Scientific Forum would provide an excellent opportunity to promote the initiative. Bosnia and Herzegovina had designated national coordinators and experts along with two laboratories to conduct activities under ZODIAC and was awaiting Agency confirmation. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed the Agency's NUTEC Plastics initiative to address plastic pollution.

54. Although not a nuclear country, Bosnia and Herzegovina intended to strengthen its legal and regulatory framework on nuclear and radiation safety and security in line with international standards. It was committed to working with the Department of Technical Cooperation to improve its national capabilities in the safe use of nuclear technology.

55. Convinced that the TC programme was the Agency's key mechanism for technology transfer and capacity building to meet the needs of Member States, and that TC resources should be sufficient, assured and predictable, Bosnia and Herzegovina had paid its annual contribution to the TCF in full and on time.

56. Ms DI GIOVANNI (Holy See), conveying the best wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis, thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their work to curb the spread of nuclear weapons and make peaceful nuclear technology available for the benefit of humankind. Appreciative of the Agency's efforts to continue providing its important services to Member States despite the considerable disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Holy See encouraged all countries to support ZODIAC.

57. The poorest and most vulnerable worldwide were hardest hit by the pandemic, along with hunger, disease and the growing impact of climate change. Every individual had a responsibility to promote a culture of care which placed human dignity and the common good at the centre of all actions and initiatives. The Holy See therefore valued the Agency's unique work, which enabled developing countries to use nuclear technology to treat cancer, grow more food, and manage and protect their water supplies. As the Agency continued to make relevant contributions in the area of climate change, by helping countries adapt to new climate realities and monitoring pollution of the ocean and ecosystems, the Holy See commended the Director General's launch of NUTEC Plastics. As Pope Francis had said, the Holy See was committed to promoting education in integral ecology, favouring a cultural model of development and sustainability focused on fraternity and an alliance between human beings and the environment.

58. Through its safeguards and verification activities based on CSAs and additional protocols, the Agency contributed significantly to building confidence and creating a world free of nuclear weapons. Its important role in establishing and maintaining the world's five NWFZs, to which 114 States belonged, should also be acknowledged.

59. She concluded by noting that Pope Francis had repeatedly condemned the possession of nuclear weapons, which created nothing but a false sense of security, as immoral and had called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. He had also called on world leaders to take the courageous decision to use the money spent on weapons for a global fund to eliminate hunger and contribute to the development of poorer countries.

60. Mr NABIL (Djibouti) said that his country appreciated the support it had received from the Agency since becoming a Member State in 2015. Priority areas of cooperation had included establishing a legal framework and regulatory infrastructure, and building national capacities in nuclear science and technology, security, energy, health and food security.

61. Turning to TC activities, he said that since 2016 focus had been given to the marine and coastal environment, in particular the development of national capacities to control and monitor marine contaminants and evaluate their impact on seafood. The introduction of nuclear methods for marine environment monitoring at the national reference laboratory had strengthened analytical skills. From 2016 to 2020, efforts had been made to build the capacity of a national core team to draft the highly important national nuclear law, to broaden understanding of the management of nuclear waste in the country, and to establish a national oncology centre.

62. On 20 September 2021, Djibouti had signed a new CPF for 2022–2027 with the Agency. It focused on the main areas where nuclear applications could play an important role in achieving national development objectives while outlining TC programme and associated support activities in the short and medium term. Its aims included: strengthening cancer treatment capacities and improving access to adequate cancer diagnosis and therapy; continuing to build national capacities to monitor food safety by improving existing infrastructure, providing training, and introducing a quality management system of ISO and IEC requirements; remedying shortcomings in the water and sanitation sector through the use of nuclear and isotopic techniques; improving waste management; and evaluating the socioeconomic and environmental impact of prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures through the launch of the East Africa climate change observatory.

63. Mr BOOBEK (Kyrgyzstan) said that radiation safety was key to his country's scientific and technical policy, promoting the development of national programmes and serving as a catalyst for technological and economic development; that policy included the safe use of nuclear technologies in the national economy and health care. It required the leadership of Kyrgyzstan to provide support to improve the regulatory framework and infrastructure enabling the country to comply with its international obligations. Efforts were also required to bring the legal foundations for nuclear safety in line with international requirements so that the best use could be made of the Agency's TC programme to meet national needs and priorities.

64. Kyrgyzstan had recently made significant progress on radiation and environmental safety. It was among other CIS countries — namely Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan — implementing the inter-State targeted programme on remediation in the territories of States affected by uranium mining industries. With the support of international partners — such as the European Commission and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development — work on the ecological remediation of uranium legacy sites and facilities in Kyrgyzstan had begun. The Strategic Master Plan, developed in close cooperation with the Agency, provided a road map for environmental remediation of uranium legacy sites in Central Asia and aimed to ensure that remediation was carried out in a timely, coordinated, cost-effective and sustainable manner in accordance with international conventions and agreements. Much work had already been done on the remediation of priority sites in Central Asia. A systematic and comprehensive risk assessment had already begun and options for remediating uranium legacy sites were under consideration.

65. The Agency functioned according to the principle of the equality of all its Member States. However, Kyrgyzstan was one of over 20 States that did not belong to a grouping of countries and was therefore deprived of the opportunity and right to be elected to the PMOs, generating inequality among Agency members. Although various countries had been raising the issue for some time, the lack of progress was undermining the Agency's authority. Calling for a comprehensive multilateral discussion of the issue, Kyrgyzstan encouraged the Secretariat to propose a solution, suggesting that the experience

of other UN system organizations where each Member State belonged to a particular group might be taken into account.

66. Lastly, Kyrgyzstan welcomed ZODIAC and the Agency's work to support national programmes related to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, including cancer therapy.

67. Mr SANOSYAN (Armenia) said that his country highly valued the Agency's central role in supporting countries' efforts to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in a safe and sustainable manner, including its professional and effective activities relating to nuclear safety and security, safeguards and technical cooperation, which sought to ensure that countries could realize their rights and meet their obligations under the NPT. For its part, Armenia attached great importance to implementing its obligations under the CNS and the Joint Convention.

68. In January 2021, his Government had approved the energy sector development strategic programme until 2040, which emphasized the overriding importance of nuclear energy in ensuring the country's energy independence. Extending the operational lifetime of the Metsamor NPP beyond 2026 with ongoing safety improvement was a priority for the Government and subject to constant monitoring at the highest leadership levels. The Armenian NPP would be completely modernized by the end of September 2021, so that its operational lifetime could be extended with higher levels of safety.

69. The commissioning of a new NPP, once the lifespan of the existing plant expired, was an important aim of the new strategic programme. Efforts must be mobilized to draw on global experience and harness the scientific and technical capabilities of flagship nuclear power projects. Noting the importance of strong support from the Agency and partner countries, and a willingness to collaborate on national programmes to develop nuclear power, increase the safety of operating NPPs and protect the environment, Armenia was confident that it would receive comprehensive and effective assistance from the Agency and partner countries in the construction of its new NPP.

70. As a nuclear power generating country, Armenia attached particular importance to the safety and security of all existing NPPs and those under construction, with full verification conducted by the Agency. Regardless of political processes, the situation at the bilateral, regional and international levels, or military and political challenges, NPPs should, without exception, be fully protected from the threat of strategically targeted strikes. Such action would be extremely dangerous and undermine regional and international peace and stability. As existing international norms provided a good basis for further strengthening international legal frameworks, Armenia stood ready to continue cooperating with interested countries and relevant international organizations to that end.

71. He expressed his country's deep gratitude to the Agency for providing a depoliticized platform for Member States to exchange experience and cooperate. Armenia shared the universally recognized view of the Agency as an authoritative, independent and objective expert body in the field of the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy for the good of humanity.

72. Mr REVAZ (Switzerland), noting that Liechtenstein associated itself with his statement, thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their commitment, without which the Agency would not have been able to maintain its operational activities during the pandemic.

73. Noting that the General Conference had approved the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety ten years previously, Switzerland commended the Agency for its contribution to strengthening global nuclear safety. It looked forward to participating actively in the International Conference on a Decade of Progress after Fukushima-Daiichi: Building on the Lessons Learned to Further Strengthen Nuclear Safety in November 2021, which it hoped would further improve nuclear safety.

74. Periodic safety reviews, the principle of continuous improvement and peer reviews were essential elements of a sustainable nuclear safety regime. Switzerland, which welcomed the increasing number

of peer review missions, would host an IRRS mission the following month. It was committed to sharing the findings in a transparent manner and to implementing them in order to strengthen its national regulatory framework. Switzerland called on all Member States to host peer reviews on a regular basis.

75. Due to chair the Fourth Extraordinary Meeting and the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention in 2022, Switzerland reiterated its commitment to improving the review process and to contributing to a detailed review of national reports.

76. May 2021 had marked the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Amendment to the CPPNM. The Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 2022, which Switzerland would have the honour of co-chairing with Nigeria, would be an important milestone for further strengthening the international legal framework for nuclear security. It would also be an opportunity to promote the universalization and more effective implementation of the Convention and its Amendment.

77. Switzerland welcomed the development of the Nuclear Security Plan 2022–2025 and would be contributing to the Nuclear Security Fund in 2021.

78. Switzerland also welcomed the Agency's efforts to clarify questions regarding Iran's declarations under its CSA and additional protocol. Full and timely cooperation with the Agency by all Member States was essential to uphold the integrity and effectiveness of the global safeguards and non-proliferation regime. Switzerland was seriously concerned at Iran's decision to suspend the provisional application of its additional protocol. His country encouraged all concerned to continue negotiations with a view to returning to the JCPOA. Full compliance with the commitments under the JCPOA was required in order to uphold the benefits of non-proliferation resulting from that important plan.

79. Supportive of efforts to further optimize the safeguards system so that the limited funds available to the Agency could be used most effectively, Switzerland had decided to join the Member State Support Programme and was currently finalizing a cooperation agreement with the Secretariat.

80. The Agency's activities in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications made an important contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. Switzerland was pleased to continue its support for the ReNuAL 2 project. It also congratulated the Agency on the 60th anniversary of the IAEA Environment Laboratories and would continue its active support for the Agency's activities in the area of nuclear applications.

81. Ms TRAORE-COULIBALY (Burkina Faso) conveyed her country's thoughts for the victims of the pandemic. In addition, Burkina Faso sincerely thanked the Agency for its outstanding assistance since the outbreak in providing diagnostic and protective equipment and capacity building. As the Agency's actions would have been impossible without extrabudgetary support, her Government thanked all Member States that had enabled the Agency to provide such invaluable assistance.

82. The focus in the 2020–2021 TC programme cycle was on nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, animal production, plant production, combating African animal trypanosomosis, radiation protection, and nuclear safety and security. Noting that the implementation rate as of 2 August 2021 was 74.04%, she said that, for the 2022–2023 cycle, five new projects had been selected, which would build on the achievements of the current project cycle. A new component would focus on atmospheric nitrogen fixation using cowpeas in order to enhance soil fertility.

83. With regard to cancer control, progress had been made in infrastructure development and capacity building. Burkina Faso thanked the Agency for its assistance in the construction of oncology and radiotherapy centres in Ouagadougou. The radiotherapy centre in Bogodogo, built with funding from

Qatar, had become operational. Her country was grateful to the Agency and the different countries that had hosted trainees from Burkina Faso.

84. Turning to agriculture, she said that Burkina Faso had made significant progress in the use of the SIT and shared its expertise with other countries in the subregion, for example by sending larvae to Senegal on a weekly basis. The Agency had provided considerable support to the Insectary of Bobo-Dioulasso in establishing a quality control laboratory; Burkina Faso was pleased that the insectary had been designated as an Agency Collaborating Centre. It was equally grateful for the Agency's technical and financial support that had facilitated the creation of more than 120 high-yield mutant rice varieties meeting the expectations of producers and consumers.

85. Her country was grateful for all the support for strengthening its regulatory framework and the capacity of its Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority. The recent IPPAS mission had been extremely useful and would strengthen national nuclear security.

86. Burkina Faso welcomed the Agency's technical and financial support for AFRA and was committed to continue supporting the Agreement by contributing regularly to its Fund.

87. Lastly, noting the importance of national contributions to enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate successfully, Burkina Faso would make every effort to pay in good time.

88. Mr YONG Hongtaek (Republic of Korea) said that his Government highly appreciated and firmly supported the ZODIAC initiative and the Agency's efforts to develop technologies to address marine plastic pollution. It had made extrabudgetary contributions of US \$1.3 million over the previous two years to help Member States strengthen their capacities in responding to infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, and was considering additional contributions to the ReNuAL+ project, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and NUTEC Plastics.

89. Committed to its role as a responsible member of the international community, the Republic of Korea recognized the importance of tireless efforts to ensure the highest levels of nuclear safety even during the current global pandemic.

90. Currently engaged in detailed preparations for the safe decommissioning of Kori Unit 1, due to be his country's first decommissioning project, his Government would be working closely with the Agency and developing regulatory guidelines based on the Safety Requirements. It would undertake a thorough review of the completeness and feasibility of the accident management plans, for severe accidents among other things, so that the public could be assured of the highest levels of nuclear safety.

91. The Republic of Korea would continue its close cooperation with the Agency on the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre and the cybersecurity training programme.

92. Issues that could cause transboundary marine pollution, such as the release of contaminated water, should be discussed by the State concerned in good faith with all stakeholders, including neighbouring countries, before a decision was taken. The Japanese Government had, however, failed to engage in sufficient consultations on that matter with its closest neighbour, the Republic of Korea, and had announced in April its decision to discharge contaminated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi NPP into the ocean despite the Republic of Korea's consistent opposition. His Government once again expressed its deepest regret that Japan was pushing ahead with its decision, had not engaged in sufficient consultations with other countries, and had not made every effort to build full understanding with the international community. It urged Japan to reconsider its decision to dispose of the contaminated water in the ocean.

93. Recalling that the Agency played a crucial role in ensuring objectivity, transparency and safety in the process of handling the contaminated water in the Fukushima Daiichi NPP, the Republic of Korea

wished to continue to participate in the Agency's monitoring and safety review activities related to the disposal of the contaminated water, including the radioactivity analysis. It trusted that Japan, as a responsible Member State of the Agency, would accommodate the request of its closest neighbour. His country looked forward to the Agency's continued role in addressing concerns and providing the necessary cooperation.

94. The DPRK's nuclear issue should be addressed through diplomacy and dialogue with a sense of urgency, as reflected in the Director General's report set out in document GC(65)/22. His Government would spare no effort in achieving substantive progress toward denuclearization through early resumption of the US–DPRK and inter-Korean dialogues. It counted on the continued support of the Agency, its Member States and the international community to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula.

95. All participants at the General Conference were committed to promoting the peaceful uses and development of nuclear energy. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented threats to sustainable development and prosperity. All Member States, under the Agency's auspices, should work together as one team to realize universal human values and preserve and maintain a safe environment; the Republic of Korea would lead the way.

96. Ms NKABANE (South Africa), noting that it was 30 years since South Africa had concluded its CSA with the Agency, said that her country was seeking to complete ratification of the revised AFRA agreement before the end of 2022.

97. South Africa was pledging €238 617 to the TCF for 2022 and continued to support the Agency's activities relating to training and capacity building in the field of nuclear science and technology under the TC programme. ZODIAC would strengthen the capacity of Member States to detect and respond to zoonotic diseases in a timely manner and reduce their economic impact. Her country welcomed the choice of Preparing for Zoonotic Outbreaks: the Role of Nuclear Science as the theme for the Scientific Forum.

98. As it embarked on the Just Energy Transition Partnership, South Africa recognized that nuclear energy played a pivotal role as one of the clean energy sources needed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The request for information for a 2500 MW programme, made in June 2020, had received positive responses. Procurement of the 2500 MW new generation capacity was expected to be completed in 2024 and would support the economic reconstruction and recovery plan and ensure security of the energy supply.

99. The necessary technical and regulatory work was being undertaken to extend the life span of the Koeberg NPP by another 20 years and South Africa thanked the Agency for its continued support through the SALTO peer review missions.

100. Significant progress had been made in the multipurpose research reactor project to replace the SAFARI-1 research reactor and the pre-feasibility report had been completed. The National Radioactive Waste Disposal Institute would be signing Practical Arrangements with the Agency for cooperation on borehole disposal of disused sealed radioactive sources on the margins of the General Conference.

101. Committed to global nuclear security, South Africa was finalizing the domestic processes for the ratification of the Amendment to the CPPNM. Her country continued to support universalization of the Convention.

102. She concluded by announcing that the South African Young Nuclear Professional Society and Women In Nuclear South Africa continued to encourage the active involvement of young people and women in nuclear-related matters. It recognized the opportunities presented by the Government's strategic direction on nuclear energy.

103. Mr AKWILAPO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country highly appreciated the Agency's indispensable contribution in ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and global peace. Noting the important role of nuclear technology, he said that Tanzania sought a strong partnership with the Agency to meet its sustainable development priorities and other needs.

104. Tanzania greatly appreciated the message from the UN Secretary-General, noting with satisfaction that science, technology and innovation had continued to play a vital role in helping countries to achieve the SDGs. It was notable that the theme of the 2021 Scientific Forum would highlight goals related to health and would focus on the use of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques as a reliable means of investigating, detecting, preventing and containing outbreaks of zoonotic diseases.

105. Placing great emphasis on capacity building in the field of nuclear science and technology, Tanzania looked forward to strong collaboration with the Agency to develop the skills and knowledge of young people. It was planning to establish a radiation protection training centre, to provide diploma courses in radiation protection, safety, electronics and nuclear instrumentation. It looked forward to further support from the Agency for staff development, laboratory equipment and the provision of expert advice.

106. Tanzania reiterated its support for AFRA, which was enhancing efforts to strengthen nuclear technology applications on the continent.

107. Grateful to Member States that provided extrabudgetary support for the Agency's programmes and initiatives, Tanzania urged other international partners to follow their example.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.