

# General Conference

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## Sixty-fifth regular session

# Plenary

## Record of the Eighth Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 22 September 2021, at 2.05 p.m.<sup>1</sup>*

**President:** Mr NGUYEN Trung Kien (Viet Nam)

**Later:** Mr BONO (United States)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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## Abbreviations used in this record

A/CPPNM	Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
AAEA	Arab Atomic Energy Agency
ABACC	Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFONE	African Commission on Nuclear Energy
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ANRP	National Radiation Protection Agency
app	mobile application
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
CEA	(French) Atomic Energy Commission
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CRP	coordinated research project
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
E3	EU Three
ENSREG	European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group
EPR	evolutionary power reactor
EU	European Union

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

Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNRBA	Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa
HEU	high enriched uranium
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IDC	International Data Centre
IMS	International Monitoring System
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
NDT	non-destructive testing
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
P5	the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	research and development
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories

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

RT-PCR	reverse transcriptase–polymerase chain reaction
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UF <sub>6</sub>	uranium hexafluoride
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
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 BAKHTARI (Afghanistan), commending the Director General's excellent leadership in maintaining the Agency's activities throughout the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic and expressing appreciation to the Secretariat for its professionalism and dedication in preparing for the General Conference, said that, instead of setting out her country's progress in the area of nuclear technology — whether relating to the achievements of the Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency and the Afghanistan National Nuclear Regulatory Authority, developments in the implementation of the CPF for Afghanistan, or new regulations ensuring the peaceful, safe and secure application of nuclear science and technology for sustainable socioeconomic development — she could regrettably do no more than highlight the humanitarian crisis facing Afghanistan following the Taliban's capture of Kabul in August 2021. Although the Agency had provided indispensable support for Afghans and vulnerable people worldwide during the COVID-19 emergency, that looming crisis placed more Afghans than ever at risk of severe infection from the disease. Her country therefore strongly supported and commended the Director General's decision to launch the ZODIAC project to strengthen global preparedness for future pandemics.

2. In recent years, the Agency had also played a major role in supporting Afghan medical staff and facilities. Human health was a key TC priority in the country's most recent CPF, with exciting progress accomplished through cooperation with the Agency. Owing to the sudden turn of events, however, all such gains were unfortunately at high risk of being lost.

3. The Taliban's ties to other international terrorists, transnational criminals and drug traffickers gave rise to grave concern about the trafficking of nuclear material through Afghanistan and its neighbours. Member States must remain alert to that issue and hold the Taliban accountable for the occurrence of any such trafficking. With the current security situation furthermore threatening the country's entire medical system, the Agency's continued health-related cooperation and assistance to ensure access to medical services throughout Afghanistan would be welcome.

4. Over the previous 20 years, her country had made incredible progress on women's rights and had worked with the Agency to give Afghan women the tools and support required for them to join the next generation of Afghan scientists. In addition to pushing for gender equality by encouraging applications for Agency fellowships, Afghanistan had advocated for a new generation of female leaders in nuclear science and technology. Afghan women's involvement in technical cooperation with the Agency had also been a high priority for the Agency itself.

5. All that progress was now in jeopardy. With the Taliban in control and with no clear understanding of how it would enforce sharia law, women's futures were in danger. Member States must stand in solidarity with Afghan women and demand that the international community ensure that their rights were respected and protected.

6. Afghanistan sincerely appreciated the Agency's cooperation and support during what was a challenging time and was grateful to its friends and allies for their contributions and assistance, both past and present. Member States should continue to reject the reinstatement of the Islamic Emirate, hold the Taliban to account for their violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, insist on an inclusive government, and draw a fundamental red line regarding the Taliban's treatment of women and girls and its respect for their rights.

7. Not all was lost, however, as the futures of Afghans — in particular Afghan women — could still be bright. Afghanistan appealed to the Agency not to forget it in its time of need; the Agency's assistance was key to helping it to sustain the progress made and ensure that the Afghan people could continue to benefit from that assistance without fear.

8. Mr MEZGHANI (Tunisia), thanking the Secretariat for ensuring the continuity of the Agency's main functions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, said that his country looked forward to the Agency's ongoing support for a key research platform established by its Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in partnership with its Ministry of Health, to promote national R&D capacities in SARS-CoV-2 control.

9. In view of the continued adverse impact of the pandemic on various cooperation projects and research contracts, it was important to consider extending implementation deadlines on an exceptional basis so as to meet all the objectives set. As continuing restrictions on travel and movement prevented the completion of certain training, expert service and procurement activities, it was likewise appropriate to adopt exceptional measures in order to reallocate the earmarked funds.

10. Considering ZODIAC a forward-looking framework for integrated action to respond to zoonoses, Tunisia had appointed a national ZODIAC coordinator and formed a network of specialized task forces. By participating in the initiative, his country expected to strengthen its collective capacities in preparedness for, and response to, zoonotic threats to minimize the spread of pandemics.

11. The NUTEC Plastics initiative was an effective tool for combating plastic pollution through recycling using radiation technology and marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques. With its 1400-km coastline, Tunisia was no stranger to the problem of marine plastic pollution and looked forward to participating in the initiative in order to obtain science-based evidence to characterize and assess marine microplastic pollution, establish measures and policies to reduce plastics and eliminate them at source, and explore the potential use of ionizing radiation in plastic recycling by transforming plastic waste into reusable resources.

12. In preparing to host the 18th Francophonie Summit in November 2021 and mindful of the substantial number of delegations expected to attend, Tunisia had decided to bolster its usual security arrangements with nuclear security measures. In that context, it had officially requested the Agency to provide the necessary detection equipment and training, which would not only enhance security at the event in accordance with international standards but also boost his country's cooperation with the Agency and strengthen its national capacities in nuclear security.

13. Over the previous decades, Tunisia had worked to remain an important partner of the Agency by fulfilling all its individual and shared commitments in connection with the Agency's programmes and work mechanisms. Despite facing significant socioeconomic and security challenges in the preceding years, the country had noted a considerable decline in the TC funds allocated to its national projects. Its hope therefore was that national TC project proposals for the 2022–2023 TC cycle would receive the desired support and that Tunisia would receive more funds in future. His country attached paramount importance to enhancing technical cooperation — an essential part of the Agency's mandate — in the common interests of all parties.

14. Tunisia was dissatisfied with the underrepresentation of its citizens among staff in the Department of Technical Cooperation, the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security and elsewhere in the Secretariat, especially as it had the required talent available. As that situation reflected neither its deep historical cooperation with the Agency nor its status as a founding Member, Tunisia renewed its request to the Secretariat to increase Tunisian representation among its staff.



15. The international community had made insufficient progress towards eliminating the risk of nuclear proliferation and increasing the effectiveness of the safeguards system. Efforts must be stepped up to achieve real progress in disarmament and persuade all States to accede to the NPT, which was vital for confidence building.

16. Although pleased with the efforts made to limit the risks of nuclear armament, Tunisia reiterated its call to accelerate the establishment of a Middle East zone free of all WMDs, especially nuclear weapons, and urged the General Conference to take appropriate steps to that end, in particular by subjecting all nuclear activities to Agency monitoring.

17. Mr O'LEARY (Ireland) said that his country strongly supported the Director General's leadership in ensuring that the Agency fulfilled its unique and vital role. In continuing to work towards the full implementation of all three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT, the State Parties to the Treaty must use the additional time afforded by the postponement of the Tenth NPT Review Conference until January 2022 to better prepare for a substantial meeting with a successful outcome.

18. As recognized by the General Conference, there was an important link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, with progress on the latter still critically needed. The existence of nuclear weapons undoubtedly made the world a less secure place. Ireland was fully committed to the NPT, to the highest levels of nuclear security and to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

19. In August 2020, on the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima attack, Ireland had ratified the TPNW, which had entered into force in January 2021. The TPNW provided a legal pathway for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT and strengthened the Agency's safeguards system.

20. The year 2021 also marked the 25th anniversary of the CTBT, which was an integral part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. As President of the United Nations Security Council for September 2022, Ireland would host a high-level briefing in recognition of that milestone for the CTBT. His country called on each of the eight Annex 2 States that had not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. All States should abide by the moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions and refrain from any action contrary to the CTBT's object and purpose.

21. The Agency played an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT, under which the CSA and the additional protocol constituted the current verification standard. It was vital that States developing their civilian nuclear programmes rescind their SQPs and sign and ratify the additional protocol as a matter of priority. The upcoming NPT Review Conference would provide a timely opportunity to reaffirm the importance of universal adherence to Agency safeguards and build momentum to make progress on that issue.

22. Pleased to have contributed to the Agency's verification and monitoring activities pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2016), Ireland strongly supported the JCPOA and expressed grave concern at Iran's increasing breaches. His country urged Iran to return to full compliance with the JCPOA and hoped that talks in Vienna would resume shortly, paving the way for the USA's return and for the Plan's restoration. The Director General's recent visit to Iran to address the urgent situation was welcomed. Iran should immediately provide full replies to all the Agency's questions regarding its safeguards and resume full cooperation with the Agency, including application of the additional protocol, so that the Agency could provide assurances as to the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

23. Ireland urged the DPRK to abandon its nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to demonstrate good faith by immediately signing and ratifying the CTBT and returning to compliance with the NPT and full cooperation with the Agency. Ireland furthermore

regretted that Syria had not yet resolved its safeguards issues with the Agency and called on it to cooperate with the Agency as a matter of priority.

24. Ireland commended the Director General and the Agency for working to advance gender parity — the achievement of which was closely linked to improved effectiveness in all areas of work — and continued to advocate for the equal participation of women and men across nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

25. Giving assurance of its continued support for the Agency, Ireland had presented its candidacy for a seat on the Board. If elected, his country looked forward to working closely with the Agency over the coming two years.

26. Mr GITHAE (Kenya) said that his country attached great importance to the Agency's work and was pleased that it continued to support Member States through the use of nuclear science and technology, including in human and animal health, energy, food production, water management, industrial applications and environmental protection, which was in line with the national development plan as set out in Kenya Vision 2030.

27. His country thanked the Agency and donor countries for having so rapidly assisted Member States, including his, to manage the COVID-19 pandemic by providing them with RT-PCR diagnostic equipment and related kits. That support had contributed significantly to improving detection capabilities to stem the spread of the disease and thereby mitigate its impacts. Kenya welcomed the ZODIAC project aimed at strengthening the preparedness and capabilities of Member States to manage zoonotic diseases by building institutional capacity and looked forward to collaborating with the Agency on that project. Similarly appreciative of the Agency's role in strengthening the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, Kenya would make an additional contribution towards the ReNuAL project.

28. Thanks to the Agency's ongoing support for the expansion of radiotherapy services, Kenya had recently commissioned a new radiotherapy centre at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, which was the country's second cancer care hub. Serving a region with a population of approximately 25 million, the centre greatly facilitated access to cancer treatment services. Additionally, with the Agency's support, Kenya had procured a cobalt-60 radiation therapy calibration system, which would improve cancer service quality across the country.

29. With agriculture as one of its ongoing priorities, Kenya appreciated the Agency's support for the development of resilient crop varieties and of new varieties of quality fodder to address challenges in the beef and milk production value chains. In that context, it was pleasing to note that a Kenyan was among the recipients of the Women in Plant Mutation Breeding Award.

30. Kenya was grateful for the training provided through the Agency and looked forward to establishing local institutional capacity to offer both graduate and postgraduate training in nuclear science and engineering. Kenya also valued the support provided through the Internet Reactor Laboratory project, which would assist research undertaken by national universities. Kenya stood ready to continue partnering with the Agency, including by offering training opportunities in the field of nuclear science to fellows from the region.

31. In June 2021, Kenya had received an INIR follow-up mission to assess the implementation of the Phase 1 recommendations. The mission had concluded that significant progress had been made in introducing nuclear power into the energy mix. His country also looked forward to continued collaboration with the Agency on a feasibility study aimed at strengthening the national understanding of the obligations and commitments involved in the introduction of a sustainable research reactor programme.

32. Kenya had made significant strides in developing regulations for the operationalization of its Nuclear Regulatory Act of 2019 and thanked the Agency for its continued support in strengthening the regulator's competencies. That support would greatly assist the regulator's role in ensuring radiation protection for people and the environment.

33. With the Agency's valued cooperation over the years, Kenya had established an NDT society and looked forward to the development of an NDT training, qualification and certification scheme at all levels. The scheme would improve the industrial sector's performance, providing high economic benefits and socioeconomic development.

34. Kenya welcomed the NUTEC Plastics initiative and looked forward to working with the Agency on using nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques to address the challenges of plastic pollution. Kenya also encouraged the Agency to work closely with UNEP, which was based in Nairobi, to synergize efforts in addressing marine litter and plastic pollution.

35. In conclusion, Kenya reiterated the importance of the Agency's role in fostering international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and underscored the need to ensure sufficient funding for TC activities.

36. Mr WATSON (Jamaica) said that his country's valued partnership with the Agency, which spanned more than five decades, continued to contribute to Jamaican scientific and socioeconomic development. Jamaica especially appreciated the Agency's support for its thrust towards enhancing R&D and harnessing nuclear energy for sustainable development, in alignment with the SDGs and the country's national development plan, Vision 2030.

37. Jamaica commended the Secretariat for its agility in responding to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agency's rapid pivoting and response was testament to its unwavering commitment to supporting the needs of its Member States.

38. Since the start of the pandemic, over 127 Member States had benefited from the largest TC project in the Agency's history, which had involved the delivery of diagnostic kits and other medical equipment. In Jamaica's case, that support had not only helped to bolster its capacity to prevent and contain the spread of the virus but had also saved the lives of many of its citizens.

39. Jamaica remained deeply grateful for the support provided through the Agency's TC programme in the 2020–2021 cycle, which had borne fruit in three areas above all. First, Jamaica's official launch of the Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority in late October 2020 had made it the first country in the English-speaking Caribbean to establish a full regulatory body for radiation protection and safety. Secondly, in the area of water and environment, a project with the National Irrigation Commission to assist farmers in improving water and fertilizer use to increase production yield had produced excellent results. Such projects complemented ongoing national efforts to expand agricultural production and trade, build resilience to the impact of climate change, and strengthen food security. Thirdly, in the area of health, digital mammography units had been procured to support the country's two major hospitals in improving the quality and safety of breast cancer screening and diagnostics. Jamaica was committed to further strengthening its successful cooperation with the Agency.

40. Earlier in 2021, Jamaica had deposited an instrument of acceptance to further extend ARCAL, which remained an important mechanism for technical cooperation at the regional level. Through the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences, moreover, Jamaica was committed to contributing to knowledge transfer and nuclear energy promotion among other members of the Caribbean Community and, by extension, across the Latin American region.

41. Encouraged by the Agency's continued efforts to be innovative and solutions-oriented, Jamaica would engage with the Secretariat on ZODIAC, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and NUTEC Plastics and stood ready to contribute to the successful implementation of those initiatives.

42. As countries worked collectively towards the attainment of the SDGs, the Agency had demonstrated its creativity, readiness and commitment to join other multilateral organizations in addressing some of the most pressing global challenges, including the impact of climate change and the need to accelerate renewable energy development, sustainable industrial development, food security and health care delivery. Jamaica reaffirmed its full support to the Secretariat and its commitment to using nuclear technology safely and effectively for the greater good.

43. Ms MAINALI (Nepal), thanking the Director General for his valuable work in the face of the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, said that her country appreciated the Agency's tremendous efforts towards achieving its mission to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful application of nuclear science and technology, contributing as a result to international peace and security and the achievement of the SDGs.

44. A party or signatory to major disarmament-related international treaties or conventions, Nepal had always been committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Nuclear science and technology should be used only for peaceful purposes and under Agency safeguards. In 2020, moreover, Nepal had promulgated a law governing the utilization and regulation of radioactive materials, further confirming its commitment to Agency norms.

45. The Agency's technical cooperation, which Nepal had received through various projects since 2012, played a central role in the development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes, including cooperation on health-care capacity development in countries like her own where the application of nuclear technology was limited. Nepal also supported the ZODIAC project as an important tool in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Her country looked forward to working closely with the Agency on that project, which would help to strengthen preparedness for, and response to, zoonotic disease outbreaks.

46. Nepal was ready to step up its cooperation with the Agency, including in the areas of health, agriculture and livestock, NDT aimed at verifying the integrity of key infrastructure and cultural heritage sites, education and research, human resource development and capacity building, equipment and technology transfer, nuclear safety, regulatory framework, and further strengthening of the safeguards regime. Nepal remained committed to supporting the Agency's activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for a better world.

47. Mr HORVATIĆ (Croatia), expressing his country's gratitude to the Agency and Director General for ensuring that the Agency's activities continued during such globally challenging times, said that the Agency's exceptional efforts in the area of virtual education ensured that expertise was widely available to a large number of participants, which would further enhance national capacities and expand the pool of experts in radiological and nuclear safety. His country applauded the Agency's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and highly appreciated its support to Member States. The virus detection and diagnostic equipment provided had been a very important asset in controlling the pandemic.

48. Croatia strongly supported the goals of cooperation between the Agency and all Member States: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, safe use of nuclear material and technology, and sustainable development. In the light of climate change, the effects of which were felt on a daily basis, sustainable development — as a balance between economic and social factors — was becoming an indispensable component of national strategies. In addition, Croatia's ongoing positive cooperation with the Agency had given it the opportunity to adopt and participate in the implementation of international standards by improving nuclear safety in the country and the region.

49. With respect to national activities in 2020, Croatia was working intensively to improve the national regulatory framework for radiological and nuclear safety by implementing international commitments, in line with the recommendations of the IRRS. The CPF adopted for 2020–2025 identified five priority areas for technical cooperation with the Agency, with three national projects already under way and Croatian experts participating in several regional projects in accordance with the CPF priorities. Croatia was particularly committed to continuing and successful cooperation with its neighbours, Hungary and Slovenia, regarding the timely exchange of information in the event of a radiological emergency.

50. His country highly appreciated the opportunity afforded to it by the Agency, as a globally useful community, to access good practices and come into contact with experts who shared their knowledge and experience. Croatia looked forward to exchanging and using that knowledge and experience in future and would continue to support the Agency's work and the further development of its capacities.

51. Mr MAPHOSSA (Mozambique), congratulating the Agency on its organization of the General Conference amid the COVID-19 pandemic, expressed his country's deep gratitude for the Agency's unconditional support, embodied in the provision of equipment and consumables for the detection of COVID-19 at a time when Mozambique had had neither the resources nor the expertise to face the ongoing pandemic.

52. The theme of the Scientific Forum — 'Preparing for Zoonotic Outbreaks: the Role of Nuclear Science' — underlined the need to consider and take specific measures for applying the benefits of nuclear science and technology to combating zoonotic outbreaks, in particular at the present time when the COVID-19 pandemic was showing itself capable of destroying humanity. While focused on maternal and child health and HIV reduction, SDG 3, which was aimed at ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, necessarily inferred action to address the problem of zoonotic diseases. Mozambique already had a national ZODIAC commission, coordinated by the Institute of Agricultural Research and comprising representatives from the ministries responsible for health, environment, and agriculture and universities.

53. The TC programme between Mozambique and the Agency played an important role in building the country's technical capacities and training its human resources, all of which was essential for the safe use of nuclear science and technology. A full set of dosimetry equipment received under the programme in 2021 was being installed and operators were undergoing training. The equipment would contribute to the radiological protection of occupationally exposed workers. The country's national inventory of sources had also benefited from technical cooperation, having received a complete edition of the Regulatory Authority Information System software.

54. In the area of cancer prevention and treatment, the country's first radiotherapy service — based around a clinical linear accelerator — had been successfully launched and the installation of high dose rate brachytherapy equipment at Maputo Central Hospital was at a very advanced stage.

55. Committed to the safety and physical protection of radioactive and nuclear material, Mozambique was finalizing the ratification of the A/CPPNM and had also made progress in the area of radiological and nuclear emergencies. In that context, the Mozambique National Atomic Energy Agency had recently been integrated into a national emergency committee attached to the National Institute of Disaster Management.

56. Mr MNISI (Eswatini) said that the Agency, under the Director General's leadership, was to be applauded for its expeditious and ongoing support to countries in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, which it provided, together with relevant training and guidance, in the form of equipment for detecting the virus by means of nuclear techniques. Eswatini continued to benefit from test kits, reagents and many other items supplied in response to COVID-19.

57. His country also expressed gratitude for the training fellowships and scientific visits awarded to Swati citizens and for the grants that enabled them to attend meetings and workshops. The scholarships received for masters level training in nuclear science and technology were equally appreciated, as was the funding provided to Eswatini for projects approved under the TC programme.

58. His country was already expanding its uses of nuclear science and technology through that programme, as reflected in its CPF for 2019–2023, which had been signed in May 2019. Eswatini was currently implementing several projects under the TC programme, one of them involving the development of an integrated resource plan for evidence-based decision-making in the energy and electricity sector, which principally focused on ensuring access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all. Another of those projects was designed to build capacity in the use of stable isotope techniques in evaluating interventions to improve infant and young child feeding practices. Eswatini had seen an increase in chronic malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, with essential infant feeding practices adversely affected in addition by the triple threat of poverty, HIV and recurrent droughts — challenges that the project was intended to tackle. A further project was centred on preparations for the country's first radiotherapy facility, the aim of which was to address the double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including cancer.

59. Eswatini was also participating in the regional project 'Supporting Member States to increase access to affordable, equitable, effective and sustainable radiation medicine services within a comprehensive cancer control system'. Moreover, the country was proposing new projects for the subsequent TC cycle, all of which were at the design stage.

60. Eswatini attached great importance to the Agency's core mandate concerning non-proliferation, nuclear energy, nuclear safety, nuclear security and technical cooperation, areas in which it would continue to engage fully with the Agency.

**Mr Bono (United States of America), Vice-President, took the Chair.**

61. Mr NDOCKI (Cameroon), noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had been affecting the entire world since the end of 2019, said that his country commended and thanked the Agency for its provision of RT–PCR equipment to over 100 countries, including Cameroon.

62. His country welcomed the fact that the Agency had continued to discharge its important mission in spite of the pandemic. Many training activities had taken place virtually and as scheduled, with some events attracting even more participants than if they had been held in person. Cameroon encouraged the Agency to continue innovating to ensure the continuity of the activities within its mandate.

63. The Agency's TC programme comprised several national projects for Cameroon that had been successfully implemented thanks to the joint efforts of management officers and national counterparts. Thanking the Agency for sharing the cost of acquiring a new cobalt-60 source to equip the radiotherapy department at Douala General Hospital, Cameroon expressed its appreciation for that form of financing initiated by the Agency, which could be tailored to urgent and essential projects, especially in the area of health.

64. In 2020, Cameroon had been due to receive an expert mission to do with the management of spent radioactive sources contained in gamma density gauges but the mission had been prevented by the COVID-19 pandemic. His country recommended that the mission should remain on the Agency's calendar with a view to it being conducted in the near future.

65. In order to strengthen national cooperation on nuclear security, Cameroon's ANRP and General Directorate for Customs had reached an agreement in December 2020 to combat the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and other radioactive substances. The implementation of that partnership would require the Agency's support in the form of training and provision of detection equipment.

66. Cameroon again thanked the Agency for its assistance in the implementation of nuclear security measures at the 2020 African Nations Championship. His country also appreciated the nuclear security-related activities carried out — and those still envisaged — in connection with the Africa Cup of Nations that it would be hosting in January 2022. Equally appreciated was the assistance received from the Agency, via the ANRP, in terms of scrutinizing its draft national emergency response plan from the radiological and nuclear aspects.

67. His country encouraged regional and international initiatives for enhancing cooperation with the aim of achieving a high level of nuclear safety and security and the universal application of Agency safeguards. Cameroon therefore called on the Agency to support AFRA, the FNRBA and AFCONE.

68. Cameroon had concluded a CSA with the Agency, with an SQP and additional protocol in force. Reports were regularly submitted to the Agency, in which context the Agency's development of an online submission process was welcome.

69. Acknowledging the Agency's unique role in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security regime, Cameroon restated its confidence in the Agency's further provision of assistance to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy around the world.

70. Mr NGUYEN Trung Kien (Viet Nam) said that his country appreciated the Agency's tremendous efforts and remarkable achievements in discharging its mission to ensure that nuclear energy was used for peaceful development purposes and that safety and security prevailed throughout the world, especially in the face of the manifold challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

71. Viet Nam expressed sincere gratitude to the Agency for its timely provision of RT-PCR equipment, together with the necessary supplies and materials for SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis and testing, at the time of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and for its continued sponsoring of mobile PCR testing equipment and biological products developed on the basis of advanced nuclear technology to assist his country's response efforts.

72. Viet Nam reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and sustainable development, especially in solving problems and global issues through Agency initiatives such as ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastics, which his country would cooperate with the Agency to implement. Viet Nam congratulated the Agency on completing the first phase of the modern Yukiya Amano Laboratories to improve its capacity to help countries fight and prevent transboundary zoonotic diseases and address challenges related to climate change and food safety. Viet Nam would contribute financially to the second phase of that important project.

73. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Agency continued to carry out its mission and programmes in the areas of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. Viet Nam welcomed the First International Conference on Nuclear Law scheduled to take place in February 2022, which would provide an important opportunity for exchanging views on how to consolidate the international legal framework governing the development and application of nuclear science and technology.

74. The Agency's cooperation and support via technical cooperation played an important role in helping Viet Nam to implement its new research reactor project and to attain significant achievements in the application of nuclear energy in a range of spheres. For the 2020–2021 cycle, in addition to implementing 6 national TC projects, his country had participated in 10 regional and interregional projects, while for the 2022–2023 cycle, 6 national projects had been developed and finalized with the Agency's assistance. The Agency was helping Viet Nam prepare its CPF for 2022–2027 through identifying priorities for support that the Agency could provide to the country. Also under the TC programme, Viet Nam had made great efforts to implement the Practical Arrangements for triangular cooperation among itself, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In that context,

resources and contributions from Viet Nam were supporting the implementation of the Agency's TC programme and promoting greater technical cooperation among developing countries.

75. In conveying its appreciation and gratitude to all Agency staff for their dedication and efficiency, Viet Nam sincerely thanked the Agency for its valuable cooperation and assistance. It could count on his country's full support.

76. Mr ABDEL SHAFI (Palestine) said that his country was grateful to the Agency for working tirelessly to develop its human resource and infrastructural capacities and for supporting its efforts to control COVID-19, including by responding to its request for the provision of consumables, testing equipment and secure testing cabinets to the Ministry of Health. The delivery of those items was persistently delayed, however, as a result of clearance difficulties and increased costs and taxes imposed by Israel. Palestine nonetheless looked forward to the continuation of that support, which was to the tune of €60 000, until the end of the pandemic.

77. Through the Agency's TC programme, Palestine was implementing a number of national projects in radiation protection, agriculture, groundwater, environment and medicine. In 2021, furthermore, the Agency had secured five years of nuclear medicine training for Palestinian doctors at the King Hussein Cancer Centre in Jordan.

78. His country appreciated the Agency's continued technical support during the 2022–2023 cycle for projects to establish a centre for training and education in nuclear safety and security, improve food security through nuclear techniques, and develop capacities and infrastructure in nuclear medicine, radiation therapy and cancer treatment.

79. Having acceded to the NPT in 2015, Palestine had participated in that year's NPT Review Conference and in the first Preparatory Committee for the Tenth NPT Review Conference. Pursuant to its obligations under the NPT, Palestine had signed a CSA in June 2019, demonstrating its commitment to the universalization of the NPT.

80. Palestine hoped that the Director General would make progress in implementing resolution GC(64)/RES/15 on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, including consultations with all Member States, and that he would spare no effort to advance the early application of the CSA.

81. Palestine had been among the first States to sign and ratify the TPNW, a qualitative addition to the global nuclear disarmament regime. Palestine called on all States to accede to the Treaty and looked forward to the first meeting of States Parties thereto, scheduled for March 2022 in Vienna.

82. It had been a disappointment that, despite the efforts and flexibility of the Arab Group, the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East had not been held in 2012 pursuant to the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The five nuclear-weapon States, specifically those coordinating the conference, had a responsibility to work assiduously for the universalization of the NPT and accelerate the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs in the Middle East.

83. In the light of the postponement of the 2012 conference, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference owing to the insistence of certain States on protecting Israel from questioning in international forums, and the sustained efforts to thwart the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities in recent years, all Arab States should comprehensively review their non-proliferation and disarmament policies so as to compel the international community to face up to its legal and moral responsibilities and finally end the policy of double standards.

84. Pleased by the adoption of UN General Assembly decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, his country



welcomed the outcomes of the first session in 2019 and looked forward to the second session to be held under the presidency of Kuwait.

85. Mr GARRIBBA (European Atomic Energy Community), conveying Euratom's appreciation for the Agency's support and its role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and other radiation technologies, said that Euratom had acted as a constitutive regional partner to the wider Agency safeguards system ever since the 1970s. Cooperation had been excellent and, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Euratom and Agency safeguards had continued to be fully and effectively implemented in the EU.

86. Euratom's approach to nuclear safety and radiation protection was based on having the highest safety standards in place and on the continuous improvement of those standards. Together with ENSREG, Euratom worked closely with neighbouring countries such as Belarus and Turkey through the stress test process. It also worked with the Agency to support environmental remediation in Central Asia.

87. Euratom was pursuing its good cooperation with the Agency on peer reviews and integrated services and, in December 2020, it had renewed its support for the IRRS and ARTEMIS. Cooperation on decommissioning and the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel also continued to develop as a priority within the EU and internationally.

88. Euratom continued to strengthen its collaboration on nuclear science applications, including medical applications. For 2021–2025, it had extended the scope of the Euratom Research and Training Programme to include analysis of the applications of nuclear science and ionizing radiation technologies in medicine, industry and research.

89. Consideration should be given to new technologies, such as SMRs, that could help achieve climate objectives. The European Commission provided financial support for research into the safety and licensing aspects of such reactors and, in June 2021, Euratom had hosted the first EU workshop on SMRs. Looking forward, fusion energy had the potential to become a power source of the future. The EU played a leading role in fusion by hosting the ITER project and had allocated €5.6 billion to ITER for 2021–2027. The time had come to develop a comprehensive regulatory framework for the construction and operation of fusion facilities.

90. Ms MACEIRAS (Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) said that, 30 years previously, Argentina and Brazil had signed an agreement on the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy. The agreement had established a system of regional safeguards and an organization independent of the two countries — ABACC — to implement them. Still the only one of its kind worldwide, that innovative model had made a significant contribution to the international non-proliferation regime.

91. Since that time, ABACC had discharged its mission and displayed robust technical credibility in so doing. In 2020, ABACC had drawn positive conclusions concerning the compliance of Argentina and Brazil with their commitment to use nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

92. The conduct and evaluation of inspections constituted the core of verification activities. During the pandemic, while prioritizing the health of its staff, ABACC had resolved to continue fulfilling its mandate, complying throughout with the preventive measures in place in both countries. ABACC commended the dedication and efforts of its officials, inspectors and all members of staff and was grateful for the help afforded in that difficult situation by the Argentine and Brazilian authorities and ministries of foreign affairs. The excellent coordination of activities with the Agency had also enabled joint activities to be conducted effectively in trying circumstances.

93. Currently, there were 45 ABACC inspectors per country. Ongoing education and training were therefore a priority for maintaining and increasing their standard of excellence. During the pandemic, ABACC had sought to provide training before and after inspections and to phase in virtual training tools.

94. In 2020, ABACC had invested heavily in cutting-edge equipment and technology so as to keep its technical capacities up to date and enhance them further. The acquisition of NDT monitoring equipment and detectors and of modern devices to increase the availability and security of ABACC's technical infrastructure for communication and information management had marked progress in the implementation of the ABACC security policy and helped to usher in a work-from-home regime.

95. The Quadripartite Agreement contained well defined provisions concerning coordination and cooperation between the Agency and ABACC. Modernization of the computerized system for nuclear material accounting used by both agencies in recent years during audits performed in Argentina and Brazil had been successfully completed.

96. With respect to the ABACC–Cristallini method for sampling UF<sub>6</sub> in conversion and enrichment plants, it was a clear contribution by ABACC to safe and effective safeguards techniques that improved on the conventional procedure. The method formed the basis for an ASTM standard.

97. Construction of new nuclear facilities in Argentina and Brazil continued, giving rise to a major effort by the ABACC Secretariat to develop suitable safeguards approaches, in coordination with the Agency, in particular for the two dry stores for irradiated fuel elements from the Atucha I and Angra NPPs. Engagement was also continuing with the Agency and the countries involved with a view to promoting progress towards completion of the CAREM reactor and of the multipurpose reactors.

98. The main ingredients of ABACC's success were the sustained political commitment and provision of technical and economic support by both countries and, above all, ABACC's independence in conducting its verification activities. For 30 years, ABACC had fostered mutual trust and cooperation between Argentina and Brazil in an example of cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect between countries that contributed to regional and international security.

99. Mr COBLENTZ (ITER), noting that the Agency had been a parent organization to the ITER project, said that the relationship between the two had expanded in recent years to encompass greater cooperation on educational activities, knowledge management and public outreach, including the highly successful hosting, with the CEA, of the IAEA Fusion Energy Conference earlier in 2021. ITER had also pledged to share its valuable experience in fusion safety, radiation protection and nuclear licensing with the Agency and its Member States.

100. That information from ITER, as the first industrial-scale fusion device, would give the Agency a central role in the development and dissemination of international guidelines on various aspects of hydrogen fusion. The Agency's leadership could greatly facilitate the establishment of fusion around the world as a source of safe, environmentally friendly, virtually unlimited and highly concentrated baseload energy for future generations.

101. The ITER project had reached 75% of total construction through First Plasma. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, construction and manufacturing had made steady progress, entering the assembly phase in mid-2020. Many first-of-a-kind components had already been delivered from three continents to the ITER site: cryostat elements from India; vacuum vessel sectors from the Republic of Korea; and superconducting magnets from China, Europe, Japan and the USA, with another soon to arrive from the Russian Federation. Those advances lent confidence that the demanding specifications for hydrogen fusion could be achieved. The resulting technological innovations also created spin-off effects benefiting other fields, from medicine and robotics to manufacturing and materials science.

102. Above all, the ITER project was a clear demonstration that multinational collaboration was possible at the most practical level. Countries not always aligned on all matters were, at ITER, working hand in hand, day after day, towards the common goal of achieving a better legacy with regard to clean energy supply for future generations. Truly a tangible manifestation of ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’, such practical collaboration would be required on many fronts as the world worked to confront the challenges of climate change.

103. Mr MRABIT (Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa) said that the FNRBA, which had been established in 2009 and formally recognized as a regional intergovernmental organization in September 2019, brought together 34 African Member States of the Agency with the aim of enhancing, strengthening and harmonizing radiation protection, nuclear safety and security, regulatory infrastructure, and safety and security culture among those States. The FNRBA worked in six main thematic areas: legislative and regulatory infrastructure; radiation and waste safety; nuclear safety infrastructure; EPR; transport safety and security infrastructure; and nuclear security.

104. Mindful of the importance of developing and sustaining the capacities of the Agency’s African Member States, the FNRBA had been working tirelessly to further promote a sustainable regional nuclear safety and security framework. It had been achieving tangible results despite the significant and familiar nuclear safety and security challenges encountered by African Member States.

105. The FNRBA also placed strong emphasis on the integration of young people and women into the field and believed that African Member States could achieve major and tangible results by coming together with the commensurate level of commitment and dedication. The transformation of Africa was in their hands. All should be aware of the importance and urgency of safe and secure nuclear applications in Africa, which could be achieved in close cooperation with the Agency, AFCONE, AFRA and many other regional and global partners.

106. Mr DONA (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that, as the world’s oldest humanitarian entity and a recognized sovereign subject of international law headquartered in Rome, the Sovereign Order of Malta maintained relations at the ambassadorial level with over 110 countries — most of them Member States of the Agency — and multilateral relations with the EU and the United Nations, where it held permanent observer status pursuant to a General Assembly resolution supported by all member States. In that connection, the Order requested that its placement in the Agency’s documentation be corrected by listing it among other intergovernmental organizations instead of among NGOs.

107. The Order commended the Director General for his tireless efforts to ensure that nuclear technology was used for peaceful purposes. Such technology continued to play a pivotal role in improving the lives of the less privileged around the world, especially in the areas of agriculture, health and medicine — an important aim shared by the Order, which was committed to supporting those efforts.

108. The Order had been following the Agency’s activities since 1998. The two bodies had many objectives in common, notably in human sciences and health care. Practical Arrangements with PACT had recently been signed, with a focus on financial support for training activities, in particular at the University Hospital Centre “Mother Teresa” in Tirana.

109. Expressing appreciation for the work and achievements of the TC programme, notably in agriculture, hydrology, food security and medicine, the Order encouraged the Agency to continue bolstering those areas, with a specific emphasis on the issue of safe drinking water.

110. The topic selected for the Scientific Forum — ‘Preparing for Zoonotic Outbreaks: the Role of Nuclear Science’ — was a laudable choice and greatly relevant to the prevailing circumstances. The ZODIAC initiative would help to tackle a plethora of zoonotic diseases, such as those caused by coronaviruses.

111. With regard to nuclear safety and security, all States should strive to work together for a culture of life and peace capable of promoting human development. With the support of the Agency, the NPT — the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime — formed the basis for pursuing nuclear disarmament and represented a significant element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

112. In conclusion, the Order expressed appreciation for the Agency's important technical role in fostering peace and security and promoting human development, in particular for those in need and the most marginalized, which aligned with the Order's traditions.

113. Mr HAMDI (Arab Atomic Energy Agency) said that the Agency merited praise for having kept up its momentum of activity during the unprecedented global health crisis caused by COVID-19 to fulfil its humanitarian mission and help to reduce the burden of the pandemic by creating devices for detecting the virus and providing them free of charge to countries in need.

114. The AAEA was preparing for the second phase of the Arab Strategy for the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, for the period 2021–2030, which was to be approved at the next Arab League Summit. The strategy focused on the triad of food, water and energy security through activities in the areas of water resources and food security, human health, environment, energy, manufacturing and mining.

115. Under the Agency's TC programme for 2020–2021, the AAEA and the Agency were cooperating closely on an interregional TC project for an Arab environmental radiation monitoring and early warning network. The 12 Arab States involved, which were located in Africa and Asia, had produced a declaration on the network. The project was an exemplary model of cooperation between the AAEA and the Agency. The AAEA also coordinated on many activities of joint interest with various Agency departments, including the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, the Department of Nuclear Energy and the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture.

116. Some Arab States had initiated plans for the construction of NPPs to generate electricity, in which context the UAE's success in operating the first nuclear power reactor in the Arab region and connecting it to the electrical grid was commendable. Congratulations were also due to Egypt for having embarked on the construction of its first NPP. The AAEA stood ready to provide support on infrastructure strengthening to the remaining Arab States wishing to start building NPPs.

117. Mr GRENARD (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization), noting that 2021 marked 25 years since the CTBT had been opened for signature, said that great progress had been made towards universalizing the Treaty and establishing an international norm against nuclear testing. The Comoros and Cuba had recently joined the ranks of ratifying States, bringing the number of CTBT State Signatories to 185 and the number of ratifications to 170.

118. Over the preceding 25 years, significant investment had been made in incremental development of the CTBT verification regime, which included the IMS, IDC and on-site inspections. Incorporating 321 monitoring stations and 16 laboratories across the globe, the IMS had reached a high level of maturity, robustness and resilience, with a proven track record on numerous occasions. With nearly 94% of facilities certified, installed or under construction, the IMS was drawing closer to completion. All States Signatories had equal and timely access to the data received from the stations and the products developed by the IDC. The CTBTO had also made considerable progress in furthering its on-site inspection capabilities.

119. In addition, the CTBTO's verification technologies provided civil and scientific benefits, contributing to disaster risk reduction and expanding collective knowledge about climate change. The CTBTO offered a range of capacity-building and training programmes to support the national institutions of its member States.

120. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the importance of multilateralism and demonstrated that only coordinated and inclusive responses could effectively address global issues. Achieving a safe and secure world required enhanced cooperation, science diplomacy, multilateral partnerships and confidence-building involving all stakeholders. In that quest, the CTBTO and the Agency had always had much in common and significantly contributed to the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Strengthened cooperation and synergies would make it possible to finish what had been started and to leave to the next generation a world safe, secure and free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

121. Mr SOLANO ORTIZ (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) said that the Tlatelolco Treaty — the first legally binding international instrument to prohibit the use and possession of nuclear weapons — had been signed and ratified by the 33 countries of the region, establishing an NWFZ in Latin America and Caribbean. OPANAL had been formed in 1969 to ensure compliance with the Treaty. As the sole international intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, it provided a political and intergovernmental forum for consultations among Contracting Parties.

122. More than five decades previously, Latin America and the Caribbean had been the first region in the world to commit to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy through an international legal instrument. The political and legal creation of the Latin American and Caribbean States had inspired four other regions to follow suit and establish NWFZs.

123. Cooperation between OPANAL and the Agency was essential for the operation of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and for the effectiveness of the Tlatelolco Treaty. That included the ‘Control System’ operated by both agencies, as per Article 12 of the Treaty, to ensure compliance with the Contracting Parties’ obligations. Article 13 required Contracting Parties to negotiate multilateral or bilateral agreements with the Agency for the application of safeguards to their nuclear activities. Currently, the entire region — comprising the 33 Contracting Parties — had safeguards agreements in force with the Agency. Under Article 14, all Contracting Parties were required to submit semi-annual reports to OPANAL stating that no activity prohibited under the Treaty had occurred on their territory. The reports had been made semi-annual in an attempt to avoid creating opportunities for activities prohibited by the Treaty. As per Article 16, the Agency had the power to carry out special inspections at the request of any Contracting Party, with the involvement of the OPANAL Secretary-General and the prior authorization of the OPANAL Council. Article 19 stated that OPANAL could conclude agreements with the Agency in order to facilitate the efficient operation of the Control System.

124. The Tlatelolco Treaty had two additional protocols, both of them essential to ensuring that the region remained free of nuclear weapons. Additional Protocol I stipulated that States outside the region with territories within the zone for which they were *de jure* or *de facto* responsible must respect the statute of denuclearization. Under Additional Protocol II, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to respect the NWFZ.

125. The two additional protocols to the Tlatelolco Treaty had been ratified by all the States to which they had been opened for signature. Some of those States, however, had made interpretative declarations that constituted reservations, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the NWFZ. Since 2016, OPANAL had been offering those States a solution to the problem by proposing the signature of adjustments that would eliminate misunderstandings and achieve full respect of the Treaty. The OPANAL member States urged the nuclear-weapon States to reconsider their approach and to negotiate in good faith.

126. In addition to the obligations established under the Tlatelolco Treaty, OPANAL had sought to expand its activities in recent years by promoting the participation of its member States in international debates on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

127. OPANAL and its member States were dedicated to pursuing collaboration with the Agency to ensure continued commitment to the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean, thereby promoting and safeguarding international security on the basis of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as it had been doing for over 50 years.

128. Mr PISETH (Cambodia), reiterating that his country was fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and played its part in ensuring safety, security and safeguards at the national, regional and international levels, said that Cambodia had acceded to numerous international agreements, conventions and protocols, such as the NPT, the Bangkok Treaty and the TPNW, in addition to concluding a CSA. It was also considering signing other instruments to further cement its dedication to safety, security and safeguards concerning the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

129. His country's commitment was demonstrated by its Constitution, pursuant to which the manufacturing, use and storage of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons were absolutely prohibited. Many other laws were also in place to control activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials. A comprehensive nuclear law covering nuclear safety, security, safeguards and civil liability was being prepared, in close conformity with international standards for such legislation.

130. Since rejoining the membership in 2009, Cambodia had received significant assistance from the Agency to achieve its sustainable development goals. Under the TC programme, Cambodia had successfully implemented numerous projects related to the peaceful use of nuclear technology in various sectors such as agriculture, with a particular focus on soil fertility, crop management and livestock production. The TC programme had also contributed to the establishment of the first national cancer centre in Cambodia, which had been inaugurated in early 2018. While the centre had been established with Government funding, the Agency's technical support had been crucial to the centre's sustained ability to enhance capabilities in cancer treatment and nuclear medicine. Similarly, the TC programme had provided instrumental support for the future launch and establishment of a regulatory authority following the adoption of the nuclear law.

131. In the energy sector, although a nuclear power programme lay far in the future, Cambodia strongly believed that it was essential to establish soft infrastructure, including the necessary regulatory framework, to build institutional capacity and competency and develop human resources with a view to putting in place safety and security regulations and standards. His country extended its appreciation to other external partners for their strong support, especially in providing staff training through a variety of programmes.

132. Cambodia expressed its sincerest appreciation to the Agency for having provided five sets of RT-PCR COVID-19 detection kits to the country, which had greatly assisted it in combating the pandemic.

133. Cambodia had established a number of competent authorities, including the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the National Counterterrorism Committee and the National Authority of Chemical Weapons, for overseeing safety, security and safeguards in relation to nuclear and radioactive materials and activities in the country. Cambodia also worked closely with international partners, such as the Agency, the EU, the US Department of Energy and the Japan Atomic Energy Agency, on matters ranging from legislation and applications of nuclear science and technology in health, industry and agriculture to safety, security and safeguards. Cambodia conveyed its profound gratitude to its international partners for supporting its efforts to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful use of radiation sources in the country by organizing workshops, training and the supply of technical equipment, including radiation portal monitors.

134. His country had been actively involved in the specification and development of the Integrated Nuclear Security Network system for mobile handheld equipment and in two CRPs. Also an active user

of the Tool for Radiation Alarm and Commodity Evaluation app, Cambodia looked forward to working with the Agency on future CRPs and to developing national technical and legal documents as well as training activities. It was additionally planning to update its INSSP with the Agency in December 2021.

135. His country reiterated its appreciation for the cooperation extended to it by the Agency, Member States and other partners and appealed for more cooperative programmes to promote nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and development in Cambodia.

136. Mr MARIOTTE (France), speaking on behalf of the P5 in exercise of the right of reply, said that the P5 was disappointed to have to respond to references made by a number of countries to the TPNW, as it believed that the Agency was not the appropriate forum for discussion of that Treaty. Its views on the Treaty were well known; the P5 would not sign it, would not be bound by it, and did not consider it an effective measure as envisioned by the NPT.

137. Ms MAMMADOVA (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation did not raise topics in the current platform that were unrelated to the Agency. Azerbaijan called on Armenia to bring to the table issues that related to the Agency's agenda and purpose, such as that of nuclear smuggling from Metsamor NPP in July 2019 through the border at Bagratashen, so as to strengthen nuclear security in line with the Agency's mandate.

138. Mr GHARIB ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it was absurd that the regime of Israel, which was not a party to any disarmament or arms control treaty, had once again preached to Iran. Regrettably, that regime continued to ignore the international community by downplaying the significance of the NPT, refusing to accede to it and refusing to place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the Agency's safeguards system. That regime had become so cynical and jaded as to manipulate reality and criticize other Member States of the Agency that were States Parties to the NPT on the basis that they had obligations as such, whereas Israel did not. That was a very serious shortcoming and failure in the Agency's work and should be properly addressed.

139. The majority of States intervening in the meeting had recognized the important fact that the JCPOA should be implemented in full by all its parties and that the lifting of sanctions was a crucial part of the JCPOA. It was the USA that had violated UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2016) by unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA and adopting the failed maximum pressure policy by reimposing sanctions. Given that the lifting of sanctions had constituted the fundamental basis for Iran's consent to join the deal, the USA's violations had rendered those parts of the deal void and effectively futile.

140. Unfortunately, those concerns had not been meaningfully addressed by the E3, which had neither complied with its commitments nor provided practical solutions for rectifying the blatant violation of the deal by the USA. It had not been possible, therefore, for Iran to continue as if nothing had happened. Iran had resorted to remedial measures with the aim of balancing the reciprocal commitments in the deal. Those countries that had requested in the meeting that Iran return to full implementation of the deal must realize that the problems lay elsewhere and ask for sanctions to be lifted practically and effectively.

141. It was saddening that countries that blamed Iran for enriching uranium by 60%, which was for humanitarian and peaceful purposes, had decided to sell military nuclear submarines to Australia using HEU fuel enriched to above 90%. Iran had consistently stated that every Member State of the Agency had the right to pursue its peaceful nuclear programme regardless of the level of enrichment, which was based exclusively on its needs and in accordance with Agency safeguards. For Australia, the safeguards arrangement to be reached with the Agency concerning its nuclear submarines was essential. The Agency should have access to the HEU nuclear material in Australia at agreed and reasonable times. No

excuses were acceptable in that regard. The Agency should keep the Board of Governors regularly informed on that important matter.

142. For the USA and the UK, significant disarmament and non-proliferation issues were at stake. Both should stop such a vulgar facade of double standards and hypocrisy and avoid compromising their obligations under the NPT, in particular Article III thereof, under the pretext of their fabricated, so-called strategic concerns.

143. Mr BULYCHEV (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation had to react to the unjustified allegations made against his country at an earlier meeting. There were no Russian-occupied territories in Georgia. The Russian Federation regretted that the current session of the General Conference had been used by the Georgian delegation in an attempt to present its distorted view of reality.

**The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.**