

General Conference

GC(66)/OR.4

Issued: October 2023

General Distribution

Original: English

Sixty-sixth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Fourth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Tuesday, 27 September 2022, at 3.05 p.m.

President: Mr CORTESE (Italy)

Later: Mr STOIAN (Romania)

Later: Mr WANG Qun (China)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹	Paragraphs
6 General debate and Annual Report for 2021 (<i>continued</i>)	1–257
Statements by the delegates of:	
Lesotho	1–5
Italy	6–17
Cyprus	18–24
Armenia	25–33
Pakistan	34–44
Monaco	45–50
Cambodia	51–60
Lao People's Democratic Republic	61–65
South Africa	66–75

¹ GC(66)/17

Contents (continued)

	Paragraphs
Democratic Republic of the Congo	76–85
Zambia	86–93
China	94–105
Ireland	106–118
United Arab Emirates	119–129
Ecuador	130–138
Mexico	139–148
Colombia	149–156
Romania	157–167
Kenya	168–176
Thailand	177–186
Iraq	187–194
Nicaragua	195–200
Spain	201–212
Australia	213–223
Singapore	224–228
Oman	229–236
El Salvador	237–241
Syrian Arab Republic	242–252
Japan (right of reply)	253
Republic of Korea (right of reply)	254
China (right of reply)	255
Japan (right of reply)	256
China (right of reply)	257

Abbreviations used in this record

A/CPPNM	Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ALPS	Advanced Liquid Processing System
ARASIA	Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia 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
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COMPASS	Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for SSACs and SRAs
ConvEx	Convention Exercise
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CRP	coordinated research project
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EEA	European Economic Area
EPR	emergency preparedness and response

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
GICNT	Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
GW	gigawatt
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICTP	Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INSARR	Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactors
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITDB	Incident and Trafficking Database
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
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
MNSR	miniature neutron source reactor
MW	megawatt
MW(e)	megawatt electrical
NDT	non-destructive testing
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the 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
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

OMARR	Operation and Maintenance Assessment for Research Reactors
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PET	positron emission tomography
R&D	research and development
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Site and External Events Design
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

6. General debate and Annual Report for 2021 (continued) (GC(66)/4)

1. Mr SEKATLE (Lesotho) said that his country was currently implementing three TC projects in the areas of nutrition, agriculture, human resources in the health sector and regulatory infrastructure. Lesotho remained indebted to the Agency and expressed its unequivocal support for the TC programme.

2. The Radiation Protection Agency Act 2018 had paved the way for the establishment of a regulatory body with an adequately staffed and skilled Secretariat. Lesotho appreciated the scientific visits and the workshops provided to its regulatory body by the Agency.

3. Lesotho, like the rest of Africa, faced the double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The continent lacked capacities for preparedness, prevention, detection and response to many communicable diseases, which often persisted long after the development of a cure or elimination elsewhere. It seemed that the same would be true of COVID-19, which, moreover, had reversed most of the gains made in Africa. In addition, it took remarkable amounts of resources to manage and control his country's high HIV and tuberculosis infection rates. Non-communicable diseases led to a significant number of deaths among people of all ages in Lesotho, with cervical, breast and prostate cancer being rife and affecting a large number of people of reproductive age. The theme of the 2022 Scientific Forum: "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All" was therefore timely.

4. Despite its inadequate infrastructure, capacity and resources, Lesotho had established a national non-communicable disease programme to develop policies, guidelines and protocols for all levels of care and had developed a national cancer control plan to guide overall multistakeholder control strategies. It had also established four cancer treatment centres, a chemotherapy clinic and a second palliative treatment centre and had started building a cancer treatment hospital. Moreover, it had trained health professionals, had instituted cancer screening in all primary health facilities and had achieved 80% vaccination coverage against human papillomavirus among girls aged 9–13 years following the reintroduction of the relevant programme.

5. Nevertheless, stark challenges remained. Lesotho lacked adequate facilities for testing, diagnosis and cancer treatment, especially radiotherapy. It also needed adequate financial resources, a comprehensive national cancer registry and a robust programme to promote and provide information on cancer prevention and healthy lifestyles. Cooperation, collaboration and coordination were vital to ensure that no one was left behind.

6. Mr DELLA VEDOVA (Italy), pleased at his country's presidency of the General Conference, commended the Director General and his staff for their work over the preceding year. Italy highly valued the crucial role played by the Agency in the current difficult and dramatic circumstances and would continue supporting all its activities.

7. With the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unlawful aggression continuing to affect Ukrainian nuclear facilities, Italy praised the recent IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya and the Director General's efforts to assess the situation on the ground professionally, independently and objectively, to assist the plant's Ukrainian management and other staff and to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Europe's largest NPP. During a recent meeting with the Director General, the Prime Minister of Italy had expressed his full support for the Agency's determination in tackling the worrisome consequences of the Russian Federation's large scale

armed attack on Ukraine, and in particular for the seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict.

8. The JCPOA was a crucial element of the global non-proliferation architecture and a successful achievement of multilateral diplomacy. Italy had repeatedly called for the complete and effective application of the JCPOA by all participants and had welcomed the negotiations in Vienna to re-establish the Plan after the USA's withdrawal in 2018. Despite substantial progress in the negotiations, it was regrettable that they had still not concluded a year and a half later.

9. At the same time, the advancement of Iranian nuclear R&D was not conducive to an early end of the present stalemate and was a cause of growing concern. Italy urged Iran to resume full implementation of its obligations under the JCPOA. The efforts of Agency inspectors to conduct verification and monitoring in Iran — despite Iran's progressive limitation of their access to sites and data — was greatly appreciated.

10. Italy shared the Director General's serious concern about a possible resumption of nuclear testing by the DPRK. The apparent continuation of its nuclear programme, and the increasing number of unlawful missile launches in 2022 constituted clear violations of numerous UN Security Council resolutions and a severe threat to international and regional peace and security. Underscoring that the actions taken could not confer on the DPRK the status of a nuclear-weapon State or any special status whatsoever, Italy commended the Agency for its readiness to resume its essential verification role in the DPRK as soon as conditions allowed.

11. Recognizing that the Agency's safeguards system was a crucial element of the non-proliferation architecture and for security, he said the CSAs, together with the additional protocols, represented the current verification standard and should be universalized without delay. In that connection, Italy's national regulatory authority had developed — and was now operating — an integrated informatics system for tracing all nuclear and radioactive material used, stored or transferred in the country.

12. As a party to all main international nuclear safety conventions, Italy actively supported the Agency in its continuous efforts to develop nuclear safety standards and called on all countries that had, or intended to develop, a nuclear power programme to adhere to the relevant international instruments. Fully committed to the enforcement of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary guidance, Italy was upgrading its automatic monitoring network for early warning in the event of a nuclear or radiological emergency.

13. Italy supported the Agency's central role in improving international nuclear security and encouraged all Member States to fulfil their respective responsibilities. His country had ratified the A/CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and actively participated in the Nuclear Security Contact Group and in the GICNT. In addition, it had contributed €360 000 over the preceding five years to fund the International School on Nuclear Security, jointly run by the Agency and the ICTP. The recent donation of technical equipment made by CAEN, a leading Italian company in the field of nuclear systems, to the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre further demonstrated Italy's commitment.

14. Attaching high value to the TC programme, Italy would renew its full contribution of almost €3 million to the TCF in 2022 and would provide an associate immunology officer to the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre for two years. With the improvement of the COVID-19 situation, Italy would resume hosting foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centres. In addition, the two-year Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste enabled young graduates to become clinical medical physicists in their home countries.

15. In the area of nuclear applications, the National Institute of Nuclear Physics was focusing on state of the art techniques such as radiotherapy with ion beams and accelerator-based alternatives to uranium-based production of medical radioisotopes, and the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente had been collaborating with the Agency on nuclear applications for the environment, agriculture and animal health.

16. In addition, several leading Italian institutions and companies were at the forefront of advancing research on fusion and innovative fission systems. The Divertor Tokamak Test facility, currently under construction at the Frascati Research Centre of the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, was one of the decade's main projects in controlled thermonuclear fusion activity. Moreover, Italy was involved in several research projects related to small modular reactors and stood ready to supply components.

17. By way of conclusion, his country encouraged the Agency to continue all its activities related to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technologies.

18. Mr KORNELIOU (Cyprus), expressing appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of the Secretariat and praising the work of the Director General and his staff in such difficult times, said that his country commended the Agency on its achievements in the area of non-proliferation.

19. As a party to all major international treaties and conventions on nuclear safety and security, his country was fully committed to their implementation.

20. Cyprus highly valued the role of the TC programme in enhancing the responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and achieving the SDGs and had gained knowledge and expertise through various projects funded by the TCF. Over the years, his country had co-organized a number of Agency events and would continue to do so. It currently had two national projects under the 2020–2023 programme and intended to implement new projects in future cycles.

21. Following the finalization of its INSSP, Cyprus had started implementing a series of activities under the associated implementation plan for 2019–2022. In addition, over the preceding year, the Agency had provided Cyprus with experts to build its capacity for the cradle to grave management of sealed radioactive sources, and equipment for radioactive source management and EPR. The national regulatory body had participated in several meetings and international exercises and had organized a regional meeting on occupational exposure with Agency support. It would also host a regional exercise in November 2022 in conjunction with the Agency.

22. As Cyprus marked the 20th anniversary of the introduction of specific national legislation on radiation protection and nuclear safety and security, it was committed to maintaining and further strengthening radiation safety and security, as well as EPR. 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. Cyprus supported all measures and initiatives to strengthen national and international nuclear safety and security and urged all Member States to uphold the highest levels of safety and security in their nuclear facilities to protect themselves and other countries.

23. Given the potential transboundary impact of a nuclear event, international and regional cooperation were of utmost importance. It was therefore vital to ensure 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.

24. No Member State should underestimate the risks to nuclear security, given the significant potential for an act of war, terrorist attacks, loss of control or cyberattacks. In that context, Cyprus once again called on all Member States to cooperate and exchange information.

25. Mr VARDANYAN (Armenia) said that further development of nuclear energy was a high priority for Armenia, given its importance for the stability and sustainability of the country's energy sector. Armenia was developing a preliminary feasibility study for the construction of a new power unit under its strategic programme for energy sector development until 2040. In that regard, his country looked forward to continuing its close and effective cooperation with the Agency to fully benefit from the Agency's comprehensive scientific, regulatory, technical and technological assistance.

26. In view of the importance that Armenia attached to the enhancement of nuclear and radiation safety and the development of a safety culture, it had modernized the main safety systems of its NPP since 2016 as part of the operation extension programme for the second power unit, in line with Agency guidelines and recommendations. The block of power generation systems had been entirely renovated and the safety systems had been replaced or upgraded, thus significantly increasing the reliability and safe operation of the plant. The Agency had assessed the results of the modernization during the SALTO follow-up review mission to the NPP in October 2021, which had identified significant improvements in relation to its 2018 recommendations.

27. Armenia attached high priority to the effective implementation of its obligations under nuclear and radiation safety conventions. In that connection, the Government had decided to establish a national operator for radioactive waste management and work was under way on its structure and terms of reference.

28. The safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, as well as related environmental issues, were important elements of the overall safety improvement programme for the Armenian NPP. Under its strategy for the management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, his country had developed and launched a programme for the modernization of radioactive waste management systems as part of the Armenian NPP operating life extension programme. A dry storage facility for spent nuclear fuel, built with the support of international partners, would ensure the safe management and storage of spent nuclear fuel until at least 2050.

29. Armenia had actively participated in the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting in 2022. It was glad that the country group report had identified two areas of good performance regarding the development and approval of Armenia's management strategy and action plan, and that it had commended Armenia for clearly addressing the challenges identified during the Sixth Review Meeting.

30. Armenia highly valued the Agency's central role in strengthening the global nuclear security framework and its continued provision of assistance to States to establish and maintain effective nuclear security regimes. In line with its obligations and in the spirit of transparency and constructive dialogue, Armenia regularly submitted reports and declarations to the Agency in accordance with the established procedure.

31. Armenia had actively cooperated with the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence since 2021 to prevent illegal trafficking of nuclear and radiological material and, with the support of international partners, was modernizing the physical protection system of the Armenian NPP. Those activities and commitments, as well as recent nuclear security developments, had informed and guided Armenia's active participation in the First A/CPPNM Conference in March 2022. It was encouraging that States had been able to further their common understanding and efforts in physical protection and achieve consensus on their shared priorities in an outcome document.

32. Armenia attached high priority to the security of nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes, at all times and in all circumstances, and had been voicing that position since July 2020.

Recalling the General Conference resolutions of 1985² and 1990³ prohibiting armed attacks or threats of attacks against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, Armenia was grateful for the Director General's constant focus on the security of nuclear installations and commended the Agency for its dedication. The 'seven pillars' had provided a solid basis for addressing the issue from the perspective of the Agency's mandate.

33. The Agency's work in human health made a crucial contribution to the SDGs. Armenia highly valued the Agency's continued support to integrate radiation medicine in national cancer control programmes. It welcomed Rays of Hope and looked forward to progress under that initiative to help States overcome the burden of cancer.

34. Mr ANWAR (Pakistan) said that recent extreme weather events had again highlighted the greatest challenge facing humanity. In line with that, the Agency's move to organize the present General Conference as a green event was commendable. Heat waves, floods and droughts had further exacerbated the economic turmoil that most developing countries were facing as a result of high energy costs.

35. The ongoing catastrophic floods in Pakistan, which was among the ten countries most vulnerable to climate change, showed the urgent need for global action to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The flooding had left a third of the country under water and had led to thousands of deaths and economic losses of over \$40 billion. The recent events also highlighted the crucial need to set up a global fund to mitigate climate disasters in developing countries and thus reduce human suffering.

36. Global issues required global solutions and close and unrestricted cooperation, and access to nuclear power was the need of the hour. Pakistan was taking steps to limit its greenhouse gas emissions and consistently re-evaluated its energy mix. With Karachi NPP Unit 3 — the country's sixth nuclear reactor — in operation, Pakistan's nuclear power generation capacity had increased to 3530 MW(e) in 2022 and nuclear energy currently provided 15% of the country's power. Pakistan was also striving to boost future nuclear energy production.

37. Apart from power generation, Pakistan was also reaping the benefits of nuclear technology in the areas of agriculture, human health, industry and the environment. Through its association with the Agency, his country was using nuclear science and technology effectively to achieve the SDGs.

38. Nuclear technology played a key role in cancer diagnosis and treatment. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was building another cancer hospital to add to the 19 others across the country, which treated more than one million patients annually. In full support of the Rays of Hope initiative, Pakistan had offered to provide expertise and facilities to impart training and share best practices with developing countries.

39. With the COVID-19 pandemic having alerted the world to the profound dangers associated with zoonotic diseases, Pakistan looked forward to contributing to the success of the ZODIAC initiative through its Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology and its National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering. In addition, Pakistan keenly participated in NUTEC Plastics to control the major environmental challenge of plastic pollution, which posed a direct threat to life and health.

40. Over the years, Pakistan had benefited greatly from mutual partnership with the Agency through the TC programme, strengthening its national capacity while also extending its capabilities and expertise to support other Member States by hosting fellowships, scientific visits, training courses and workshops under the Agency's auspices. In addition, Pakistan had signed Practical Arrangements with the Agency

² GC(XXIX)/RES/444

³ GC(XXXIV)/RES/533

in the area of peaceful uses of atomic energy. It had also aligned its TC programme with the Agency's Medium Term Strategy by designing and implementing comprehensive national TC projects for sustainable development and stood ready to share its experience with other Member States. One project had been successfully implemented and three more projects in the areas of agriculture, human health and nuclear power were under way for the 2022–2023 TC cycle.

41. Pakistan had supported the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme since its inception, with six women currently completing a fully funded master's degree at the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

42. Pakistan applauded the Agency's support and assistance in the area of nuclear security. Considering nuclear security to be a national responsibility, Pakistan had developed a comprehensive nuclear security regime, which was regularly reviewed and updated in the light of the A/CPPNM, Agency guidance documents and international best practices. The Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security trained the required workforce and the training facilities were available to regional and international fellows. It was important that the Agency promote and strictly ensure diversity in its workforce through equitable and merit-based representation from developing countries.

43. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority was fully independent and shared its expertise with other developing countries through the Agency, which was assisting it in continuously updating existing regulations on nuclear safety and security and formulating new regulations. His country had recently hosted a successful IRRS follow-up mission, which had recognized an improvement in its safety and regulatory regime.

44. Pakistan greatly valued the role of nuclear science and technology in socioeconomic development and would continue to cooperate with the Agency to advance their peaceful uses.

45. Ms ROSABRUNETTO (Monaco) commended the Agency's work under the Director General's leadership during a period of profound geopolitical changes with considerable human and socioeconomic repercussions. At a time when the world's ability to protect nuclear material at all times and in all places was in doubt, it was essential to reaffirm the Agency's motto of "atoms for peace and development" and the intrinsic link between peace and sustainable development.

46. The Agency's instruments provided a strong global nuclear safety and security framework against dangerous acts that undermined the safety and security of nuclear facilities, and had raised new hopes by promoting the protection of people and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

47. Welcoming and supporting the Agency's unstinting efforts in Ukraine, Monaco urged Member States to strive to maintain the safety and security of nuclear installations at all costs. In that connection, her country had a partnership to establish a unit of measurement of background radiation that could be used as an alert mechanism in the event of an unusual rise in radioactivity in its territory.

48. The fight against marine pollution and the preservation of human health were important areas of the Agency's work and were increasingly interconnected, given the intrinsic link between ocean health and human health. NUTEC Plastics had opened up new possibilities for reducing the effects of marine plastic pollution with the help of nuclear technologies, and stood to make a valuable contribution to the forthcoming development of an international legal instrument in that area.

49. The ZODIAC programme to strengthen capacities to detect and rapidly respond to pandemics was another excellent example of the importance of scientific applications of nuclear technology in the area of health. Welcoming the theme of the 2022 Scientific Forum, Monaco would continue its fight against cancer by making a multiyear financial commitment to Rays of Hope, in addition to the regular support that it provided through PACT.

50. At a time of tensions around energy resources, Monaco remained committed to the development of renewable energies — a major aspect of the peaceful use of nuclear technology. It welcomed the Agency's involvement in the search for renewable energy solutions, and in particular the cooperation with the ITER project, which was expected to pave the way for energy based on resources that would be abundant and equitably distributed throughout the planet. Monaco had long supported the ITER project by funding fellowships for postdoctoral students, who would work alongside experts and scientists on the construction and subsequent operation of the first experimental thermonuclear reactor.

Mr Stoian (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

51. Mr EANG (Cambodia) said that, under the Constitution, his country was absolutely prohibited from manufacturing, using or storing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Cambodia therefore had many laws on the control of activities involving nuclear and radioactive material and was drafting a national nuclear law.

52. Fully committed to non-proliferation and to nuclear safety and security and safeguards at the national, regional and global levels, Cambodia had a CSA and was a party to numerous international instruments, including the NPT, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia NWFZ and the TPNW. It had acceded to the Assistance Convention at the Treaty Event on the margins of the current General Conference and was considering joining other conventions.

53. Since the reinstatement of its membership in 2009, Cambodia had received significant assistance from the Agency to achieve the SDGs. Under the TC programme, his country had successfully implemented many projects in various agricultural areas and had inaugurated its first national cancer centre in 2018. Although the centre had been established using government funds, the Agency's technical support, including for design, installation of equipment and capacity building, had been crucial for the centre's sustainability in enhancing capabilities in cancer treatment and nuclear medicine.

54. Cambodia firmly believed in the importance of soft infrastructure, including a regulatory framework, to build and develop institutional capacity, competency and human resources to establish safety and security regulations and standards. The strong support provided by other external partners, especially in training Cambodia's valuable staff, was appreciated.

55. Cambodia had established numerous competent authorities in the areas of safeguards and the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material and activities and was working very closely with its international partners, including the Agency, the EU, the USA and Japan, on those areas, as well as on relevant legislation and nuclear applications in health, industry and agriculture.

56. With regard to the legal and regulatory framework, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, among others, had been mandated to promote and regulate the peaceful, safe, and secure use of nuclear science and technology — including ionizing radiation — and was actively establishing the necessary legal and technical frameworks. The ministry had promulgated a ministerial circular on the management of import and use of radioactive substances and sources in Cambodia and — with the Agency's technical support — was currently drafting technical guidance on basic safety and security for the use of radiation sources, expected to be issued in 2023.

57. Cambodia was committed to regional and global efforts to counter WMDs and illegal trafficking of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials. It thanked the Agency, the USA, the EU and other international partners for their support to strengthen its nuclear security through national and regional capacity building and the provision of radiation portal monitors and other technical equipment.

58. Cambodia actively participated in the GICNT; the Proliferation Security Initiative; the USA's Megaports Initiative and Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance programme; and the EU's partner-to-partner programmes. It was also involved in the specification and development of the

Integrated Nuclear Security Network System for mobile handheld equipment and in two CRPs, and actively used the Tool for Radiation Alarm and Commodity Evaluation. Cambodia looked forward to working with the Agency on future CRPs and the development of national technical and legal documents and training.

59. Cambodia sincerely appreciated the support provided by the Division of Nuclear Security to organize two national workshops and an INSSP review meeting earlier in 2022 and looked forward to continued support to implement its updated Plan.

60. Lastly, Cambodia deeply appreciated the cooperation provided by the Agency, Member States and external partners and appealed for more cooperation programmes to promote nuclear technology for peace and development.

61. Mr SUNDARA (Lao People's Democratic Republic), welcoming the Agency's achievements over the preceding year, said that his country had been working tirelessly to overcome existing and emerging challenges in order to ensure the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology.

62. Through the TC programme, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had continued to receive excellent cooperation and assistance from the Agency in the areas of science, agriculture, sustainable energy, public health and animal health. Under its CPF, it was implementing projects to strengthen capacities in peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology in order to support food security, address malnutrition and enhance surface and groundwater management.

63. Committed to international disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular through instruments such as the NPT, the CPPNM and the TPNW, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had actively implemented relevant UN Security Council resolutions and had submitted two national reports. In compliance with those international frameworks, it had been implementing the 2019 Law on Radiation Protection and Safety and was developing a ministry-level legal framework to support and strengthen that implementation. Regarding nuclear security measures, his country had adopted its INSSP in July 2020. It had also recently adopted the modified SQP and had submitted its initial report to the Agency in July 2022.

64. As a small developing country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic continued to face challenges — such as insufficient capacity and resources — in implementing international frameworks and would be unable to fulfil all its international obligations without the support and assistance of the international community. It was crucial to strengthen that essential cooperation and assistance, especially during the current difficult time. His country would work closely with the Agency and the international community to implement its obligations and achieve common objectives regarding the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology.

65. His country expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Agency and its Member States for providing consistent support and would continue to count on them for enhanced cooperation and assistance.

66. Ms NKABANE (South Africa), noting that the Tenth NPT Review Conference was the second such conference to conclude without adopting an outcome document, said that her country was deeply troubled by nuclear-weapon States' lack of commitment to disarmament, while non-nuclear-weapon States continued to honour their non-proliferation obligations.

67. Despite that regrettable failure, the Tenth NPT Review Conference had raised a number of issues relevant to the General Conference. South Africa sincerely hoped that the General Conference would take positive steps towards enhancing the contribution of nuclear technology to development.

68. As a Contracting Party to the CNS, South Africa placed great importance on nuclear safety and the Agency's central role in coordinating international efforts to strengthen that area. Her country had also participated in the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting and had met the related obligations.

69. The South African electricity company Eskom had submitted a license application and a safety case for long term operation to the National Nuclear Regulator in July 2022 in order to extend the lifespan of Koeberg NPP for another 20 years. To support the safety case, Eskom had invited the Agency to conduct a SALTO mission in early 2022. South Africa was also finalizing the framework for procuring 2500 MW of new nuclear power generation capacity under its Integrated Resource Plan 2019.

70. Highlighting the top five cancers reported by the national cancer registry in 2019, she welcomed the theme of the 2022 Scientific Forum: "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All". The Rays of Hope initiative would strengthen Member States' capacity to address gaps in cancer care and explore the importance of radiation medicine, innovation and collaboration in supporting equitable access to life-saving diagnostics and treatment. As a regional leader in cancer-related issues, South Africa pledged its facilities and expertise with a view to realizing the goals of the initiative.

71. The project to replace the SAFARI-1 reactor with a multipurpose reactor had received government approval, and the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation had completed the required prefeasibility study and had issued a request for information in February 2022. The national nuclear regulatory regime allowed flexibility for SAFARI-1 to be a sustainable operational irradiation facility well beyond 2030, supported by a well-executed ageing management programme. An engineering assessment and in-service inspections had been performed, with the recommendations justifying further safe operation until the new multipurpose reactor was operational. SAFARI-1 was therefore expected to continue operating, ensuring continued production of medical radioisotopes and other nuclear-related R&D technologies. The overlap between the operation of SAFARI-1 and of the multipurpose reactor would thus guarantee that South Africa remained a global player in nuclear technology R&D.

72. The iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator-Based Sciences, which had recently become South Africa's first Collaborating Centre, had successfully installed an accelerator-based radioisotope production facility for medical, research and industrial applications. In addition, her country was establishing a centralized interim storage facility for the safe, secure and sustainable management of spent nuclear and high level waste.

73. The South African Young Nuclear Professionals Society and Women in Nuclear South Africa continued to encourage the youth and women to be actively involved in nuclear activities. In that connection, South Africa thanked the Agency for the inspiring Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, from which several young South African women had benefited.

74. In relation to the TC programme, South Africa was pleased to pledge €217 610 towards the TCF for 2023. It was vital to build human and institutional capacity for the sustainable application of nuclear technology for development and to strengthen regional cooperation across all thematic areas. Her country had therefore contributed €186 605 towards AFRA for the 2022–2023 biennium.

75. In closing, she reiterated South Africa's unwavering support for the Agency's fundamental role in ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology for development in line with the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

76. Mr KABANGU (Democratic Republic of the Congo), reaffirming his country's firm commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, expressed deep gratitude to the Director General and the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Technical Cooperation's Division for Africa, which had provided remarkable support to regional and interregional projects in which his country participated.

77. The strategic position and great nuclear potential of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had made it a traditional partner of the Agency since 1961. Thanks to that beneficial partnership, his country had been able to strengthen its research capacities in the area of peaceful applications of nuclear sciences and techniques through numerous national, regional and interregional TC projects under AFRA.

78. As part of its cooperation with the Agency on human and animal health, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had received an impACT mission in 2021 and had acquired a new gamma camera for nuclear medicine purposes through cost sharing. It appreciated the Rays of Hope initiative to help low- and middle-income Member States combat cancer and the ZODIAC project on addressing zoonotic diseases. In support of those initiatives, his Government had established a substantial budget line for 2022 and beyond for the construction of a multidagnostic and radiotherapy centre. The Democratic Republic of the Congo requested the support and cooperation of the Agency and other partners to ensure the successful completion of that major national project.

79. Higher education programmes in nuclear science and technology were an area for future collaboration. The Democratic Republic of the Congo thanked the Agency for its support in establishing a graduate school of nuclear science and techniques in Kinshasa and for its help in resolving the major security issues at its nuclear and radiological facilities. In 2021 and 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been conducting various activities to train human resources and support nuclear security, and was committed to establishing a national nuclear security support and training centre.

80. His country thanked the USA for agreeing to fund the strengthening of physical protection systems at the nuclear facilities of the Kinshasa Regional Nuclear Research Centre and to develop human capacities for the various nuclear security functions. It also requested other partners to provide scientific, financial and technical support to boost research into nuclear sciences and techniques and thus consolidate their peaceful use.

81. Resolutely committed to combating WMD proliferation and making Africa an NWFZ, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had deposited its instruments of ratification for the Pelindaba Treaty and the TPNW in March and September 2022, respectively.

82. Following its decision to restart the TRICO II research reactor after several years of shutdown, his country had received pre-OMARR and INSARR missions in 2018, and a mission had been conducted in 2019 to visually inspect the nuclear fuel and ascertain its condition. Two other Agency missions were scheduled for the last quarter of 2022 to inspect the internal reactor structures and assess the operation and maintenance of the reactor.

83. To meet the Agency's requirements and, above all, to demonstrate its firm commitment to the implementation of that project, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had approved a three-year budget for 2022–2024, based on a strategic action plan approved by the Agency, with an allocation of more than \$1 million for 2022 and an additional special allocation of about \$3.4 million. His country was taking a public-private partnership approach and invited its traditional partners to support the implementation of the project and other aspects of its nuclear programme, in particular the establishment of a pilot radiotherapy centre and a graduate school of nuclear science and techniques.

84. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also planned to explore complementary technologies, in particular to enhance its project on diagnosis and radiotherapy with PET capabilities, in line with the President's vision to be implemented by the new management committee of the General Atomic Energy Commission.

85. In closing, he reiterated his country's determination to build a nuclear-weapon-free world and to pool Member States' knowledge to promote the benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

86. Mr MUTATI (Zambia), commending the Agency's tireless efforts to promote and strengthen the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, said that such uses had been an integral component of his country's national development objectives since it had become a Member State in 1969. With considerable Agency assistance, Zambia had made remarkable achievements in improving radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services, increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening the regulatory framework.

87. To further promote and expand nuclear technology applications, Zambia had developed the National Nuclear Policy 2020 in order to provide a framework for the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology in sectors such as agriculture, health, mining, education and the environment. The nuclear policy also provided for the repeal of the existing ionizing radiation protection law and the enactment of a comprehensive nuclear law. His country recognized the need to adhere to the relevant international legal instruments adopted within the framework of the Agency in order to ensure a safe, secure and sustainable nuclear science and technology programme.

88. Nuclear medicine facilities had been operational at Zambia's University Teaching Hospital since the early 1980s. His country was now expanding and installing modern nuclear medicine facilities nationwide to deal with the increased demand and requirements for nuclear medicine services.

89. Recognizing the need to control cancer and reduce premature mortality using the primary health care approach in order to achieve universal health coverage, Zambia had developed its second national cancer control strategic plan for 2022–2026. His country had opened a comprehensive cancer treatment centre in 2006 to provide radiotherapy services, which catered not only for Zambians, but also for other patients from the sub-Saharan region. As a result, Zambia had become a regional centre for cancer diagnosis, treatment and training and, in order to enhance that capacity, it had prioritized the replacement of radiotherapy equipment.

90. The continued technical cooperation with the Agency was appreciated. Zambia had requested to be considered as one of the second wave of countries to participate in the Rays of Hope initiative and had subsequently submitted to the Agency the bankable document for the replacement and refurbishment of radiotherapy infrastructure and equipment at the cancer centre. It now expected to work with the Agency to source the required funding.

91. Zambia planned to invest in its health infrastructure and personnel in order to ensure a healthy population and become a middle-income country by 2030. Prioritizing food security for all, his country was building its capacity in agricultural productivity through technical cooperation with the Agency and was also establishing a multi-irradiation centre, which was essential for value addition in food production.

92. Zambia recognized that radiological and nuclear accidents transcended national borders and that collaboration with neighbouring countries was key in achieving the safety and security of radioactive material. Accordingly, the national regulatory body had signed a number of memoranda of understanding with regulatory bodies of certain neighbouring countries to enhance the safety and security of radioactive material during transportation.

93. With Agency support, Zambia continued to train personnel in radiation medicine. It had signed a new CPF for 2022–2027 and thanked the Agency for its valuable support in developing that document. An active participant in AFRA, his country was in the process of accepting the sixth extension of the agreement and would continue to contribute to the AFRA Fund.

94. Mr WANG Chang (China), noting that development was an eternal theme for humanity, said that, in recent years, the Agency had focused on expanding the role of nuclear technology in development through its Medium Term Strategy 2024–2029. It had also launched Rays of Hope, NUTEC Plastics and the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative, had striven to bolster the nuclear safety legal

framework, and had successfully convened the First International Conference on Nuclear Law, the First A/CPPNM Conference and the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting.

95. The Agency had worked hard to build public confidence in nuclear safety, including by establishing a task force to assess and supervise Japan's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP and by conducting safety assessments and providing technical assistance in relation to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP. China appreciated the Agency's efforts to promote nuclear energy development and ensure nuclear safety.

96. His country was committed to developing a clean, safe and efficient low carbon energy mix and considered nuclear energy to be an important option in its endeavour to achieve a carbon peak and carbon neutrality. The mainland had 53 nuclear power units in operation, with a total installed capacity of 55.59 GW, placing China in second place globally in terms of annual nuclear power generation. With 23 nuclear power reactors under construction, adding an additional 24.19 GW of installed capacity, his country maintained its leading position in that area.

97. Generation III advanced nuclear technology had gradually achieved large scale application in China, with the first batch of four Hualong-1 units having been completed and put into operation inside and outside China. China's nuclear power development had accelerated in 2022 with the approval of 10 additional power units — the highest number of power units approved in one year since the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. China also made active efforts to advance the innovative development and comprehensive use of nuclear technology.

98. The world's first ever pebble bed modular high-temperature gas cooled reactor with Generation IV advanced nuclear energy system features had been successfully connected to the grid for the first time in China. The Guohe One demonstration project was also advancing steadily. Two nuclear energy heating projects in Haiyang, Shandong province, and in Haiyan, Zhejiang province, had officially entered into operation, and the construction of China's first nuclear energy industrial steam supply project had started in Tianwan, Jiangsu province. His country stood ready to strengthen cooperation with other countries and share expertise and success stories in nuclear energy development.

99. Committed to advancing the industrialization of nuclear technology, China considered non-power applications an important way to promote social development and improve livelihoods. In recent years, irradiation sterilization technology had provided green and efficient solutions in China's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, with radiation detection having been used at large public events such as the Beijing Winter Olympics. His country had also implemented electron beam technology for water treatment on an industrial scale and had stepped up R&D efforts in relation to high end nuclear medical equipment and radiopharmaceuticals for medical and health care.

100. Working closely with the Agency, China had successively established four Collaborating Centres in nuclear agronomy, the SIT, medical isotopes, radiopharmaceuticals and ocean isotope analysis, to promote regional and global nuclear technology application capabilities. It stood ready to leverage its advantages in nuclear technology and work with other countries to jointly address global challenges in food security, health and environmental governance.

101. The present era was full of challenges but also of hopes. Only through persistent solidarity and collaboration could countries prevent and address risks and challenges in the development of the global nuclear energy industry and realize the common goal of atoms for peace and development.

102. First, it was essential to prioritize safety in order to ensure the steady long term development of the nuclear industry. All parties should uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept; step up nuclear safety and security efforts; fulfil the relevant responsibilities and

obligations effectively; and lay a solid safety foundation to create an environment conducive to the development of the global nuclear energy industry.

103. Secondly, Member States must cooperate pragmatically to promote the proper development of nuclear energy. The Agency should consolidate high quality global resources in the nuclear field and provide further technical support and services for Member States to achieve the SDGs.

104. Thirdly, Member States must remain objective and impartial and properly address controversial nuclear issues. The Agency should also maintain strict professionalism, objectivity and impartiality, abide by its Statute and ensure the fulfilment of the Board of Governors' mandate so as to play a constructive role in promoting global nuclear governance.

105. Although the journey ahead was long and full of obstacles, action must be taken to achieve the desired outcome. China stood ready to work with the Agency and Member States to share experiences and strengthen cooperation in order to promote the global nuclear infrastructure. Scientific and technical innovation and human resources training could promote nuclear technology to better serve developing countries and make greater contributions to addressing climate change and achieving the SDGs.

106. Ms CUNNIFFE (Ireland) said that her country strongly supported the Director General's leadership and the Agency's indispensable work, including its monitoring and verification activities and the assistance provided to Member States to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

107. Ireland reiterated its strongest condemnation of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine. Over the previous six months, the Russian Federation had disregarded the urgent calls made by Member States, including the Board's latest resolution of 15 September 2022⁴, to cease all actions against and at Zaporizhzhya NPP and any other nuclear facility in Ukraine in order to enable the competent Ukrainian authorities to regain full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. In that time, the Russian Federation's actions had repeatedly posed serious and direct threats to safety and security and safeguards at Ukrainian nuclear facilities. The continued occupation of Zaporizhzhya NPP in particular had compromised the 'seven pillars'.

108. Ireland fully backed the Agency's work to assist Ukraine in ensuring nuclear safety and security and to maintain Agency safeguards on all nuclear material and activities. Welcoming the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya, her country commended the Director General and his team for their courage and determination and thanked the Agency staff who continued to undertake vital work by remaining on site. Moreover, Ireland supported efforts to establish a more permanent Agency presence at the NPP in order to assist Ukraine and provide information to Member States, and the implementation of all the Director General's recommendations, including the removal of vehicles currently present inside and around the buildings to prevent interference with the operation of the safety and security systems and equipment. Furthermore, her country endorsed the Director General's important proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the NPP in order to address serious risks.

109. It was deeply disappointing that the Russian Federation had prevented the Tenth NPT Review Conference from achieving consensus on an outcome document. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and all obligations and commitments from previous Review Conferences remained valid and must be implemented. Ireland would continue to work towards full implementation across all three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT.

⁴ GOV/2022/58

110. The CSA and the additional protocol constituted the current verification standard under the NPT. 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 and without further delay.

111. Ireland recognized the sovereign right of every State to develop nuclear technologies for power generation and other peaceful uses. Nuclear and radiation technologies played an important role in areas such as medicine, industry, and food and agriculture and could provide a wide variety of socioeconomic and environmental benefits, especially in developing countries. The Agency's activities played a crucial role in supporting Member States' efforts to achieve the SDGs. If countries chose to use nuclear power, then they must do so safely and securely. Ireland continued to attach the utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety and security standards and greatly appreciated the Agency's crucial role in that regard.

112. The 'seven pillars' played a pivotal role in all circumstances, including in situations of armed conflict. As recognized by the General Conference, there was an important link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, with progress on the latter critically needed.

113. In June 2022, Ireland had participated in the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW and had welcomed the resulting adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. Her country was pleased to be appointed, together with Thailand, as informal co-facilitator on complementarity between the NPT and the TPNW during the intercessional period and looked forward to raising awareness in that area.

114. Although yet to enter into force, the CTBT made an important contribution to global peace and security and was an integral part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. With one exception, all States had upheld that global norm against nuclear testing. Ireland 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 object and purpose of the Treaty.

115. Iran's nuclear activities were inconsistent with the JCPOA and deeply troubling. The steps that Iran had taken raised very serious proliferation risks, with no plausible civilian justification in some cases, and made a return to the full implementation of the Plan more difficult. Ireland called on Iran to reverse all activity inconsistent with the JCPOA and resume full cooperation with the Agency on monitoring and verification, including the application of the additional protocol pending its early ratification. The JCPOA was of strategic importance for the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Only its full implementation and the urgent resolution of outstanding safeguard issues could provide the international community with the necessary assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

116. Ireland condemned the unprecedented number of ballistic missile launches conducted by the DPRK since September 2021 and the reoccurring indications of ongoing nuclear activities at multiple locations in the country. It supported the full implementation of UN resolutions and sanctions with a view to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the peninsula and the end of the DPRK's ballistic missile programme. A nuclear weapon test by the DPRK would be utterly unacceptable; the country's preparations to that end were therefore of grave concern. The DPRK must abandon its nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, return to compliance with the NPT and full cooperation with the Agency, and demonstrate good faith by immediately signing and ratifying the CTBT.

117. Expressing regret that Syria had not yet resolved its safeguards issues with the Agency, Ireland called on it to cooperate with the Agency as a matter of priority.

118. Commending the efforts of the Director General and the Agency to advance gender parity, Ireland had been pleased to provide support for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. Her country was convinced that achieving gender parity was closely linked to improved effectiveness across the Agency's work and that an inclusive workforce would drive global scientific and technological innovation and contribute to safeguards and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Ireland would continue to support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women across all three pillars of the NPT, and gender mainstreaming in all the Agency's work.

119. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates), praising the Director General's strong leadership, commitment and dedication and the Agency's tireless efforts to provide technical support, facilitate international cooperation and ensure non-proliferation, said that the Agency had a central role in supporting its Member States in the pursuit and development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

120. The previous week — 15 months after Barakah NPP Unit 2 had become commercially operational — Unit 3 had started up. With that historic milestone, the UAE continued to uphold the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation while leading the region's largest decarbonization programme. That had been made possible through strong national commitment and robust international cooperation, including its valuable partnership with the Agency. Once fully operational, the four units would produce 5.6 GW of electricity, preventing the release of more than 21 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually and bringing the UAE closer to achieving net zero by 2050 as it looked forward to hosting COP28 in 2023.

121. Viewing transparency as a fundamental principle of its peaceful nuclear programme, the UAE had joined the CNS and the Joint Convention, had submitted all relevant national reports under both conventions and was participating robustly in the respective review processes. The UAE welcomed the Agency's efforts to encourage accession to the CNS among Member States, in particular those planning, constructing, commissioning or operating NPPs. Global adherence to safety conventions, participation in the respective review processes and use of the Agency's peer review services would help in building confidence and strengthening nuclear safety globally.

122. Through its hosting of the sixth ConvEx-3 exercise at Barakah NPP in October 2021, in which 77 Member States, 12 international organizations and 111 international laboratories had participated, the UAE had demonstrated its robust EPR system and its sound international multilateral ties to coordinate response efforts.

123. The situation in Ukraine remained of concern. The reported violent actions at Ukrainian nuclear facilities posed a serious threat to safety, security, personnel, millions of civilians and the environment. The international community must make every possible effort to avoid a nuclear disaster and must ensure that NPPs and related facilities were not targeted and remained protected from conflict. The UAE welcomed the Director General's efforts to that end, including the recent IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya.

124. The Agency's safeguards system was indispensable in ensuring the exclusively peaceful use of all nuclear material and facilities. The UAE called on countries with nuclear activities of concern to cooperate with the Agency and restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of their programmes. Troubled by Iran's lack of substantial engagement with the Agency to resolve outstanding safeguards issues, his country called on Iran to address all concerns in a verifiable, timely and complete manner, to refrain from any actions that could undermine the Agency's safeguards and the global non-proliferation regime, and to build confidence in the peaceful intent and nature of its nuclear activities.

125. The strengthening of nuclear security worldwide would enhance public confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear applications and was a clear priority. The UAE welcomed the continued support provided by the Agency to Member States in strengthening the implementation of nuclear security measures.

126. The UAE highlighted the Agency's indispensable efforts to achieve the universalization of the CPPNM, as amended, and encouraged the Agency to continue its efforts to assist States in adhering to and fully implementing the A/CPPNM. His country adhered to its obligations under the amended CPPNM and welcomed the outcome document of the A/CPPNM Conference.

127. Strengthening the TPNW required serious steps towards its universalization. The UAE continued to support all constructive efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. It was regrettable that the recent NPT Review Conference had been unable to make progress on that matter. The UAE hoped that the forthcoming NPT review cycle would set the stage for holding important dialogue and assessing progress.

128. In relation to the proposed transfer of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS, the UAE welcomed the commitment of the involved parties to work closely with the Agency to meet non-proliferation and safeguards objectives in line with their obligations under the NPT and the respective safeguards agreements.

129. His country looked forward to working further with the Agency and its Member States to promote and ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr Cortese (Italy), President, resumed the Chair.

130. Ms MUÑOZ MERA (Ecuador) said that her country promoted peace and universal disarmament, condemned the use of WMDs and was committed to nuclear non-proliferation — a commitment borne out by its membership in the first NWFZ, covering a densely populated area of the world, and by the positions it had taken in all international forums rejecting non-peaceful nuclear programmes. Ecuador supported the Agency's verification and safeguards system and encouraged proposals and endeavours relating to non-proliferation, including the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

131. Her country recognized the Agency as the authority competent to verify and ensure compliance with the safeguards agreements signed by Member States, in line with the NPT and the Agency's Statute, so as to prevent the diversion of expertise, technology and nuclear material for belligerent purposes. Ecuador therefore underscored the importance of universal adherence to the Agency's safeguards system, in particular by countries that were currently outside the system. It reiterated that accession to the NPT was not merely optional; rather, it was a priority for enabling the international community to guarantee international and regional security.

132. Having taken a principled position on nuclear non-proliferation, Ecuador firmly believed that all NPT States Parties had the inalienable right to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. That right was conditional on the faithful application of the regime, which, in return, set out non-negotiable obligations that had to be fulfilled with full transparency and without delay.

133. The safety and security of nuclear material and radioactive sources must be regulated and sustained. In view of the potential consequences of the accidental or malicious misuse of such material and nuclear technology, States had a national responsibility to spare no effort in controlling them as part of a commitment also shared with the international community.

134. Thanking the Director General and his team for their timely efforts to maintain safety and security at nuclear facilities in Ukraine, Ecuador highlighted the importance of the visits made to those facilities,

and in particular the Agency's presence at Zaporizhzhya NPP. Interim measures were urgently needed to prevent a nuclear accident in Ukraine. Her country therefore supported the Director General's consultations with the concerned parties to immediately establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhya NPP, which was occupied by the Russian Federation.

135. It was crucial to refrain from attacks or threats of attacks on or in the vicinity of nuclear facilities dedicated to peaceful purposes, so that the Agency could conduct its verification activities safely. The imminent escalation of the conflict and the unceasingly bellicose tone of discourse were of concern. Tensions must be defused to create conditions conducive to rapprochement and constructive dialogue towards peace. It was essential to prevent a nuclear disaster with unpredictable global effects on life, human health and the environment. Dialogue among States was needed more than ever to prevent another world war.

136. With Agency support, Ecuador had made progress in its national TC programme for 2022–2023, with a 49% implementation rate as of August 2022. The programme was focused on strengthening radiation safety capacities; improving the quality and safety of medical radiology services; strengthening water resources capacities; applying mutation techniques to improve the resilience of banana plants to their major diseases; and improving laboratory capacities to monitor pesticide residues. Five projects from the previous cycle, including the establishment of a marine microplastics laboratory in the Galapagos Islands and the improvement of national research infrastructure, were being completed.

137. Recognizing the Agency's provision of support to combat COVID-19 and its cooperation under PACT to develop a national cancer control plan, Ecuador expressed its interest in further cooperation with the Agency on nuclear medicine. It also appreciated the Agency's swift action to help tackle tropical race 4 — a pest that caused Fusarium wilt in banana plants and was jeopardizing the banana sector and its value chain — and looked forward to Agency support to establish an Andean Community regional centre for phytosanitary intelligence. As a sign of its confidence in the Agency, Ecuador had already pledged its contribution to the TC programme for 2023, in line with the Agency's recommended amount.

138. In closing, Ecuador emphasized the importance that it attached to ARCAL and to the Agency's TC activities more broadly, expressing appreciation for the professional work of the Department of Technical Cooperation.

139. Mr PALACIOS HERNÁNDEZ (Mexico) said that his country commended the Director General's outstanding leadership of the Agency in the exceptionally difficult circumstances generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also praised the important work of the Director General in leading the mission that had been present at Zaporizhzhya NPP since 1 September 2022 and reiterated its firm support for the Agency's efforts to ensure the safety of Ukrainian nuclear facilities.

140. Recognizing the Agency's efforts to fulfil international commitments regarding the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, Mexico supported the Agency's safeguards activities and the continued strengthening of nuclear security and nuclear and radiation safety.

141. The use of nuclear technology to address national development priorities in the areas of health, food, agriculture, water, energy and the environment supported Mexico's growth. Accordingly, his country was actively participating in 15 national and 53 regional projects under the TC programme.

142. The successful Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting had provided a forum for constructive exchange of views and knowledge on common and individual safety issues in order to identify measures aimed at maintaining a high level of nuclear safety worldwide, through effective, thorough and transparent peer review.

143. His country was honoured by the redesignation of the National Institute for Nuclear Research as a Collaborating Centre for 2022–2026 in the operational safety, maintenance and upgrading of gamma irradiation facilities in the Latin American region and was committed to continuing to achieve results in the coming period.

144. The year 2022 marked the 25th anniversary of FORO, which did invaluable work to promote and maintain the highest levels of radiation and nuclear safety and security in the Ibero-American region. Mexico had been honoured to assume the presidency of FORO in 2022 and commended the publication of the ‘Technical Programme 1997–2022: 25 years of FORO’, which compiled the results achieved in completed and ongoing projects and activities since the organization’s establishment in 1997.

145. Committed to the environment, nuclear safety and energy sovereignty and recognizing the substantial role of Laguna Verde NPP in national power generation, Mexico had renewed the operating licence for Unit 2 in August 2022 for a period of 30 years, from 2025 to 2055. Laguna Verde NPP thus remained at the forefront of clean power generation in Mexico, operating safely and reliably in line with the highest international safety standards and in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework.

146. The Rays of Hope initiative would help to increase Member States’ cancer control capacities and would provide substantial support to help reduce cancer deaths, in line with the SDGs. Committed to supporting the Agency in fulfilling its mandate, his country would continue its more than 64 years of close and effective collaboration with the Agency for the well-being of people in Mexico and beyond.

147. His country attached priority to the equal rights of all citizens, without distinction. Cooperation with the Agency had increasingly enabled Mexicans to benefit from the safe use of nuclear technologies, mainly for electricity generation; radiotherapy and radiopharmaceuticals for cancer control; and the improvement of food quality through irradiation.

148. Mexico reaffirmed its role as a socially responsible actor committed to the implementation, dissemination and continuous search for peaceful applications of nuclear energy in order to build a better and more equitable society for present and future generations.

149. Mr RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia) said that the world was facing a historic moment, with threats to security, life, human development and the environment, highlighting the importance of cooperation and a multilateral constructive approach aimed at achieving consensus on efficient and effective solutions to those threats. It was vital to support the Agency’s work in maintaining peace and international security, human health and environmental protection, especially in countries facing challenges in achieving sustainable development and social, economic and environmental justice.

150. Colombia had always advocated the strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a tool for ensuring that all efforts and available resources were directed towards guaranteeing security, freedoms and quality of life for all. His country would continue supporting the Agency’s verification activities and it urged all States to commit to ensuring the Agency’s continuity of knowledge and ongoing monitoring work.

151. As a beneficiary of the TC programme, Colombia hoped that the programme would continue to enable countries to access innovative nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes in human health, safety and radiation protection, food and agriculture, the environment, mining and energy. His country strongly supported the development of projects under Rays of Hope. With Agency cooperation, it had expanded its nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services, making them accessible to all population groups, especially the most vulnerable. In 2022, Colombia had requested the Agency’s support for a project in 2024–2025, involving preparatory work for the construction of a research reactor and the development of industrial radiopharmacy in the country, which would allow it to consolidate oncological care not only nationally, but also throughout the region.

152. With the Agency's support, his country had strengthened its technical capacities relating to the marine environment — setting a benchmark for the Latin America and Caribbean region, including in the use of nuclear and isotopic techniques. Colombia was committed to the management of plastic pollution using radiation and isotopic tracing techniques under NUTEC Plastics.

153. In the area of nuclear security, progress had been made under a project, developed with Agency support, to consolidate disused sources, thus reducing Colombia's environmental liability. He noted with great satisfaction that the project had been recognized by the Agency as a milestone. Moreover, his country was grateful to the Director General for his support in the development of a new interregional project to enhance the safe, secure and sustainable management of high activity disused sealed radioactive sources throughout their life cycle.

154. Highlighting the Agency's initiatives to include women in nuclear science and technology, he stressed the importance of achieving gender equality, empowering all women in every aspect of their lives — especially education — and addressing their underrepresentation. Colombia welcomed and staunchly supported the Director General's goal of achieving gender parity throughout the Agency by 2025 — evident in the updating of the Gender Equality Policy and Gender Action Plan.

155. Colombia reiterated its call for peace between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and highlighted the Director General's important work in ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, especially at Zaporizhzhya NPP.

156. Looking to the future, Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to building a better society by strengthening the forums provided by the Agency, which had the technical and scientific capacity to achieve consensus in addressing the world's problems.

157. Mr STOIAN (Romania) said that it was a time of an unprecedented mix of crises, marked by the Russian Federation's premeditated and unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine — a gross violation of international law, including the UN Charter. As highlighted by the Board of Governors' resolutions adopted in March and September 2022⁵, the Russian Federation's actions posed serious and direct threats to the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. Romania reiterated its call on the Russian Federation to stop its illegal war and occupation, immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and hand over control of Zaporizhzhya NPP to the competent Ukrainian authorities. His country strongly condemned the Russian Federation's attempts to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including by holding illegal referendums on Ukraine's territory. Romania would not recognize any illegal entities or the annexation of Ukraine's territory. As highlighted by the Director General, the military aggression overlapped with the energy crisis and the challenges posed by climate change and food insecurity — matters on which the Agency had an important role to play.

158. Against that background, Romania reaffirmed its support for the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, and an important element in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, it was regrettable that the Russian Federation had blocked consensus at the Tenth NPT Review Conference. The fact that all the other States Parties had been ready to support the final draft of the outcome document was evidence of the Treaty's enduring value. Encouraged by the meaningful conversations held and the fact that States had been able to overcome their differences on many issues on the agenda, Romania believed that the good work accomplished would be built on during the following NPT review cycle.

159. Romania renewed its call for the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT, and for the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. It encouraged all States to become

⁵ GOV/2022/17 and GOV/2022/58

parties to the relevant UN and Agency treaties and conventions aimed at creating a strong nuclear safety and security regime.

160. Reiterating his country's full and continued support for the Agency's safeguards system, he stressed that it was in the common interest to strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture by upholding and sustaining an efficient and effective safeguards system. Romania continued to call for the universalization of the CSA and additional protocol as the verification standard.

161. Recognizing that the use of nuclear power required a strong nuclear safety culture, including the adoption and implementation of the international safety instruments and standards, Romania had approved a national strategy for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. Moreover, at the request of Romania's Nuclear and Radioactive Waste Agency, there had been an ARTEMIS mission to the country in March 2022 aimed at conducting an independent international evaluation of the national strategy and related programme. The review team had concluded that Romania was well positioned to continue meeting high standards in a sustainable manner.

162. Nuclear security was well integrated into the relevant regulatory documents implemented by Romania's National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control. His country was grateful for the bilateral cooperation with the specialized offices of the US National Nuclear Security Administration to build capacity and identify areas of continued collaboration.

163. Romania was participating in the ITDB, and the Horia Hulubei National Institute for Research and Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering continued to be involved in nuclear forensics in Romania. Its laboratory was ready to assist the national authorities and regional and international partners in responding to cases of the unauthorized use of nuclear or other radioactive material.

164. Romania supported the Agency's work on the nuclear safety and security of advanced nuclear reactors, including small modular reactors. In 2021, it had announced plans to build a groundbreaking US-designed small modular reactor. By deploying that innovative clean technology, Romania was advancing climate action and clean energy access.

165. In August 2022 and at Romania's request, Agency experts had conducted a SEED mission to review the country's process for selecting the site of its planned small modular reactor, following an in-depth study conducted thanks to a US Trade and Development Agency grant. The mission had been the first of its kind to be conducted in relation to a small modular reactor project. The national operator, state-owned company Nuclearelectrica, remained committed to developing that project according to the highest safety standards, as it had done over its 25 years of operating Cernavodă NPP in close cooperation with the Agency.

166. His country reaffirmed its long standing commitment to the TC programme, including through voluntary contributions. It had submitted five national projects for 2024–2025, covering waste management, human health, food security and energy, and participated in eight regional and three interregional projects in those areas.

167. Romania was grateful for the opportunity to work with the Agency and the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority to enhance its nuclear safety and security, using extrabudgetary resources under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021. Moreover, it supported Rays of Hope — offering national expertise from Romanian medical centres — along with other initiatives aimed at the achievement of the SDGs.

168. Mr JUMA (Kenya), commending the Agency's important role in promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, said that his country recognized the immense potential of such applications in assisting Member States to address pressing and growing global challenges, including climate change, energy security, food security, plastic pollution and human health.

169. Kenya had made significant progress in introducing nuclear power in its energy mix. It was grateful for the Agency's continued support in that regard and looked forward to enhanced collaboration in the areas of human capital, workforce development, education, training, public participation and acceptance, with the ultimate goal of attaining high standards and good practices in nuclear safety and security, safeguards and non-proliferation.

170. Kenya recognized the importance of R&D for its nuclear power programme and the development of strategic sectors to spur economic growth. It continued to implement its national nuclear research reactor project, which had been introduced following a national needs assessment, and was conducting a feasibility study to ensure the viability and sustainability of the project.

171. Subsidiary legislation was being developed to implement the Nuclear Regulatory Act, 2019 and enhance the regulatory framework for radiation safety, the security of nuclear material and associated facilities, radioactive waste management, radioactive consumer products, EPR and the safe transport of radioactive material. Competency development for regulatory authority staff and stakeholders in radiation protection and safety also remained a priority. In October 2023, Kenya was planning to host the Postgraduate Educational Course in Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources, which would assist greatly in building human resource capacity for regulatory staff in Kenya and across the region. Kenya thanked the Agency for its support in that regard.

172. The Agency's support had led to notable progress in the development and improvement of cancer management by strengthening the requisite human and institutional capacity in different fields of radiation medicine. Thanks to a partnership with the Agency, local training had been provided in radiation oncology, medical physics, therapeutic radiography and oncology nursing. Kenya had benefited from PACT missions informing the priorities and development of its national strategic cancer plans — the most recent having been conducted in June 2022. It welcomed Rays of Hope, through which it would be receiving linear accelerator machines for two regional cancer centres. Kenya had made substantial investments in the fight against cancer and, as one of the initiative's pilot countries, looked forward to being designated an anchor centre. It would continue sharing its expertise and facilities with other countries in the region.

173. Human resource development and nuclear knowledge management were essential to the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology. Kenya expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Agency to regional designated centres, which aimed to build a large African pool of experts in nuclear science and technology. Kenya had applied to host five such centres, on which audits had been carried out. Furthermore, his country had been selected to pilot nuclear science education in two secondary schools. The Agency had sourced teaching materials, and two female teachers from the schools had attended a train the trainers course in the use of nuclear instrumentation educational kits.

174. Nuclear techniques in agriculture had facilitated the development of technologies and practices addressing production-related challenges due to climate change and soil and land degradation, which had been used to drive smallholder productivity using labelled fertilizers to measure and improve nutrient use efficiency and biological nitrogen fixation by improved bean varieties.

175. His country continued to cooperate with the Agency on the availability, accessibility, management and sustainability of water resources. It had reached crucial milestones: developing an inventory of gaps in national hydrological data, training professionals, building infrastructure capacity and establishing and equipping its National Isotope Hydrology Laboratory.

176. Kenya was grateful for its collaboration with the Agency in establishing NDT and dosimetry laboratories at the Kenya Bureau of Standards, which had benefited the industrial and health care sectors by ensuring traceability to the International System of Units through calibration services. The NDT

laboratory had also supported the oil and gas industry through training, a welder certification scheme and tests to check for compliance with stipulated standards.

177. Ms SRISWASDI (Thailand) said that the geopolitical landscape and heightened political and security-related tensions had highlighted the Agency's role in strengthening the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and safeguarding the non-proliferation regime. Her country fully supported the Agency in discharging its mandate to promote peaceful uses and ensure strict adherence to nuclear safety, security and safeguards obligations, which were essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

178. Thailand appreciated and supported the continued efforts of the Director General and the Agency to carry out verification and monitoring in a professional, impartial, and objective manner. Emphasizing that the restoration of the JCPOA was of the utmost urgency, her country commended the constructive efforts of all the participants in the Vienna negotiations and encouraged them to continue their diplomatic engagement with a view to resolving all outstanding issues and achieving the full resumption of the Plan.

179. Commending the Agency's continued efforts to monitor the DPRK's nuclear programme and maintain its readiness to resume verification once a diplomatic solution had been reached, Thailand reiterated its calls on the DPRK to comply fully with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and avoid taking further action that might escalate tensions in the region.

180. It was of paramount importance to preserve the safety and security of all nuclear facilities established and operating for peaceful purposes in Ukraine. Thailand supported the work of the Director General and the Agency in that regard and in ensuring that the relevant safeguards obligations were being fully implemented by all parties concerned.

181. Regarding the development of naval nuclear propulsion, Thailand stressed that any activities potentially setting safeguards-related precedents and giving rise to proliferation concerns should be undertaken transparently and with due consideration, taking into account the respective legal obligations of those involved. Thailand supported the Agency's continued close engagement with relevant parties on that matter.

182. Her country applauded the Agency's nuclear science and technology initiatives to address global challenges and strive towards the achievement of the SDGs: ZODIAC in the fight against pandemics; Rays of Hope in improving cancer treatment; and NUTEC Plastics in tackling one of the world's most pressing global environmental challenges.

183. Thailand supported the TC programme as an essential mechanism for Member States to build their capacity and expertise — including countries participating in the RCA, which had celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022. Her country was proud to have hosted several regional training courses during the year in cooperation with the Agency.

184. Recognizing that regional nuclear frameworks, such as ASEANTOM, played a significant role in ensuring nuclear safety and security and safeguards in the region, Thailand welcomed the endorsement of the ASEAN Protocol for Preparedness and Response for a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency and the progress in the implementation of the Practical Arrangements between ASEAN and the Agency. It was important to promote awareness of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, working in partnership with development agencies, international and regional financial institutions, and research and academic institutions.

185. Reaffirming its commitment to the NPT and underscoring the Agency's central role in strengthening the global nuclear-non-proliferation regime, promoting peaceful uses and discharging its safeguards mandate under the NPT, Thailand was disappointed that the NPT Review Conference had once again been unable to achieve consensus. It called on all the States Parties to redouble their efforts

and ensure that the following review cycle, beginning in 2023, delivered tangible progress in fulfilling the long overdue commitments under the Treaty.

186. Thailand welcomed the successful conclusion of the first meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW, held in Vienna in June 2022 and resulting in the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. The TPNW complemented existing disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, offering a new approach to nuclear disarmament, and was well positioned to advance the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Thailand remained committed to engaging with all parties to advance the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

187. Mr HUSSEN (Iraq), affirming the legitimate right of States to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology to strengthen their economic, health and development programmes and to support plans for future energy diversification to achieve the SDGs, said that his Government had passed a number of laws to that end, including the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission Act, which it was now working to implement. Having participated in the A/CPPNM Conference in 2022, Iraq was in the process of acceding to the A/CPPNM in view of its importance to safety, the environment and national and international security.

188. Iraq continued to cooperate constructively with Agency to build national capacities in all peaceful nuclear applications by participating in the Agency's TC programmes, providing training and development opportunities for young people and approving numerous national and regional projects.

189. The Iraqi authorities were working with the Department of Technical Cooperation to build national capacities to combat both communicable and chronic diseases, in particular cancer. Iraq welcomed the report on the impACT review carried out in the country, issued in August 2022, which identified priority areas and provided recommendations that would help it to design its national cancer control programme. Praising the ZODIAC project, Iraq welcomed ongoing work to equip Member States' national laboratories, nominate national ZODIAC coordinators and contribute the necessary diagnostic equipment.

190. The national executive and regulatory authorities had devised an integrated programme of action to eliminate radioactive contamination in Iraq, in addition to national strategies for the management of radioactive waste, including waste from naturally occurring radioactive material. Important steps had been taken to eliminate radioactive contamination in several regions in Iraq, boosting the Government's tireless efforts to safely dispose of radioactive waste from nuclear installations, medical centres and oil facilities.

191. Iraq commended the Agency and the EU for their support and assistance to build urgently needed facilities for the definitive burial of radioactive waste in several regions of the country. A site selection study and the necessary designs and plans for building permanent radioactive waste landfill facilities had been prepared under a previously concluded contract with the EU. Iraq hoped that it would continue to receive the necessary assistance to construct those facilities, as they were crucial for protecting people and the environment from the negative impact of radioactive waste.

192. Cooperating directly and productively with the Agency, Iraq's national authorities had cleaned up 80% of the nuclear installations at the Al Tuwaitha site, with only the core of the Tammuz 14 reactor remaining. Iraq hoped that the Agency would continue to provide support to remove the reactor core — the biggest challenge yet.

193. Iraq had a safeguards agreement and was fully committed to upholding the highest level of transparency, in full compliance with international non-proliferation treaties and conventions. One of the first Member States to ratify the NPT, Iraq called on States that had not yet signed a safeguards agreement to do so, to comply with all the provisions of the NPT and the decisions pertaining to it, and

to work closely with the Agency. His country firmly believed that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other WMDs was essential in promoting regional peace and security.

194. In conclusion, Iraq looked forward to the General Conference producing successful outcomes that would enhance cooperation among Member States for the optimal and peaceful use of nuclear technology and applications in the service of humanity, peace and international nuclear security and safety.

195. Ms MURILLO CENTENO (Nicaragua) said that as a signatory and member of the world's first NWFZ, her country reaffirmed its commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Nicaragua appreciated the Agency's extraordinary support and work, which had enabled 146 countries and territories to receive assistance through TC projects, ongoing CRPs to develop new technology, and Collaborating Centres.

196. Nicaragua was grateful that the national TC programme had enabled the acquisition of equipment to improve the capabilities of laboratories at the country's institutions, universities and national centres, along with the training of human resources. At the regional level, her country had, among other things, benefited from the acquisition of a kit to test for microplastics and materials and equipment to support the application of the SIT.

197. Nicaragua backed the ZODIAC initiative, for which around 150 Member States had designated national coordinators and more than 120 Member States had designated national laboratories, thus contributing to improving their preparedness and ability to detect and control emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases using nuclear and molecular biology-derived methods.

198. Her country was grateful for the support provided and the efforts made by Member States to address COVID-19 pandemic through TC project INT0098, 'Strengthening Capabilities of Member States in Building, Strengthening and Restoring Capacities and Services in Case of Outbreaks, Emergencies and Disasters', under which 129 countries and territories had received Agency assistance, and 305 laboratories and institutions had received TC support.

199. Nicaragua supported the NUTEC Plastics initiative to help Member States tackle plastic pollution worldwide, as well as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, through which 110 students from 77 Member States had been selected to study in 41 countries.

200. Concluding, Nicaragua reiterated its appreciation for the Agency's work, the Director General's professionalism and dedication, and the contributions of all those involved in the TC programme.

Mr WANG Qun (China), Vice-President, took the Chair.

201. Ms MONTERRUBIO VILLAR (Spain) said that on the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, her country had evoked President Truman's closing remarks at the San Francisco Conference to the effect that history would honour those that had signed the UN Charter — a solid structure upon which to build a better world. The General Conference was taking place in an exceptional context of a military invasion that undermined the core principles of the United Nations and threatened global security and prosperity, especially of the most vulnerable. Against that backdrop, Spain reaffirmed the importance of respecting the principles UN Charter and international law as the minimum standard that States should uphold and the only way to build a better world.

202. Spain stood in solidarity with Ukraine and its people, supporting the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and firmly condemning the Russian Federation's aggression, which had already cost too many lives. Her country urged the Russian Federation to comply with international law and withdraw all its troops from Ukraine. The aggression must come to an end.

203. Spain was extremely concerned about the risks posed by the Russian military aggression to the safety of all nuclear facilities in Ukraine. It had not hesitated to join the common efforts to ensure nuclear safety and had donated funds and equipment. Her country had been alarmed at the findings of the mission to Zaporizhzhya NPP, notably that the ‘seven pillars’ had been compromised, and stressed that action was needed to avert a nuclear disaster. Spain had full confidence in the Secretariat’s work and supported the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the plant and an end to all military operations in the vicinity. It urged the Russian Federation to comply with the related Board resolutions.

204. The international non-proliferation architecture was in an extremely fragile state. The failure of the Tenth NPT Review Conference to reach a consensus, which was due to the Russian Federation’s lack of accountability and did not reflect a lack of flexibility and commitment on the part of other States, illustrated the need to step up the work to strengthen the NPT and the Agency’s essential role in that process.

205. Reiterating its full confidence in the Secretariat’s work to verify Iran’s commitments and obligations under the JCPOA and safeguards agreement, Spain urged Iran to do its utmost to enable the Agency to perform the necessary verification and monitoring in order to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme. Despite intensive diplomatic negotiations and the commendable efforts of the EU High Representative as coordinator of the Joint Commission, no agreement had been reached to enable a return to full implementation of the JCPOA. Iran continued to pursue activities that were inconsistent with the JCPOA, making a return to it ever more unlikely. Her country called on Iran to comply with its legal safeguards obligations and the June 2022 Board resolution⁶ and to accept the Director General’s offer to engage substantively and proactively with the Agency.

206. Collaborating with the Agency on the implementation of safeguards was crucial. In the area of naval nuclear propulsion, Spain appreciated the transparency and open dialogue in addressing technical safeguards issues arising from the AUKUS cooperation, and the Secretariat’s impartial and professional work in that regard.

207. The well-being of citizens was a vital area in which nuclear technologies could help in achieving the SDGs. Spain welcomed initiatives such as enhanced cooperation on peaceful uses, and appreciated the Agency’s role in that sphere.

208. The Agency’s various conventions underpinned nuclear safety and security in the light of the growth in nuclear technologies — some of them new. In that connection, Spain had actively participated in the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting and had attended the First A/CPPNM Conference.

209. A number of Spain’s institutions, such as the Nuclear Safety Council, the Civil Guard and the Research Centre for Energy, Environment and Technology, supported a robust national nuclear and radiation safety regime and contributed to the Agency’s work. Spain’s membership of FORO — a meeting point for sharing knowledge and good practices and upholding the highest levels of radiation and physical safety among its members — was especially important. The forum had celebrated its 25th anniversary in Madrid in July 2022 and Spain thanked the Director General for participating in the related events.

210. Research projects, such as the International Fusion Materials Irradiation Facility–Demo Oriented Neutron Source, based in Granada, were important for the development of radiological and nuclear applications. Furthermore, Spain had supported global health initiatives such as ZODIAC and Rays of Hope.

⁶ GOV/2022/34

211. Development and prosperity could not be achieved without gender equality — a priority for Spain's domestic and foreign policy. Her country had contributed €700 000 to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme since its inception and would continue to support such initiatives, while advocating gender mainstreaming in the Agency's programmatic activities.

212. Concerted action by the international community was needed more than ever and multilateral institutions must be able to respond to major global challenges. As a key player in the multilateral system and the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, the Agency had adapted quickly and proactively to meet those challenges. Spain reiterated its support to the Agency and thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their tireless impartial and professional work.

213. Mr SADLEIR (Australia) reaffirmed his country's strong commitment to the Agency's goals and its support for the Director General and his staff. The work being done in Vienna was critical to achieving many shared interests — including the SDGs — and a global environment of peace, security and development.

214. It was a time of immense global challenge, with international security being undermined by States disregarding international rules and norms and seeking to pursue their aims by exercising power and aggression. In that regard, the Russian Federation's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine could not be normalized or minimized.

215. Committed to supporting the Agency in its efforts to ensure the integrity of the 'seven pillars', Australia condemned the Russian Federation's nuclear brinkmanship and was deeply concerned about the nuclear safety and security and safeguards implications of that country's reckless actions in Ukraine. It welcomed the Agency's commitment to monitoring the situation at Ukraine's nuclear facilities — including by establishing a continuous presence at Zaporizhzhya NPP. His country called on the Russian Federation to cease hostilities and to withdraw from the site and the whole territory of Ukraine immediately.

216. It was vital, meanwhile, that the Agency was able to continue promoting access to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. Australia had a long history of supporting the Agency in that area and applying its own leading nuclear science expertise, enabled by its seventy-year-old regulatory and safety architecture.

217. His country had been pleased to contribute extrabudgetary funding for priority projects in the region and beyond, including projects to combat plastic pollution, provide Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships for women from Pacific Island countries, support Tonga's engagement in regional TC activities and support the renovation of the Agency's nuclear applications laboratories.

218. Australia was a proud member of the RCA, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022. It was honoured to be RCA Chair for 2023 and looked forward to hosting the National RCA Representatives Meeting in Sydney in May 2023.

219. A firm supporter of the Agency's work on safety, security and safeguards, Australia stressed that strict adherence to safeguards obligations was a critical element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. It welcomed the 12 inspections, design information verification visits and complementary accesses carried out by the Agency in Australia over the year.

220. Deeply concerned by Iran's failure to resolve outstanding NPT safeguards issues in a technically credible manner, Australia noted with grave concern that Iran's actions prevented the Agency from providing assurances that its nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful. Australia supported the JCPOA and called on Iran to reverse the steps it had taken away from its nuclear-related commitments under the Plan. Furthermore, his country condemned the DPRK's ongoing development of its illegal and destabilizing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

221. It was deeply disappointing that the Tenth NPT Review Conference had not reached a consensus. Australia would continue its active engagement in ensuring the implementation of the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

222. In September 2021, the Governments of Australia, the UK and the USA had announced an 18-month consultation process to determine the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. The three countries were focused on developing a rigorous and robust non-proliferation approach. During his visit to Australia in July 2022, the Director General had emphasized the need to set a very high standard. In September 2022, the three countries had reiterated that the international community could be confident that they would continue to work transparently with the Agency towards an approach that would strengthen the non-proliferation regime — entirely consistent with their long standing commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and their track record of upholding their respective legal obligations.

223. Australia would continue to provide updates on the related consultations with the Agency. Consistent with the Agency's well-established mandate and authority on such matters, the Director General had issued a factual and independent technical report to the Board of Governors on those consultations and the development of suitable verification measures for the programme. Noting the Director General's satisfaction with the AUKUS partners' level of engagement, Australia firmly respected his prerogative to report as he deemed appropriate.

224. Mr BHATIA (Singapore) thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their tireless work in carrying out the Agency's important mandate in an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. The NPT was under strain — it had been 12 years since a Review Conference had produced a substantive outcome. Meanwhile, the Agency had continued to uphold the international non-proliferation regime, notably through its essential safeguards verification activities, and assist developing countries to achieve the SDGs through the safe and secure application of nuclear technology for peaceful uses. Singapore remained confident that the Agency would continue to deliver on its mandate in a professional, objective and transparent manner.

225. Singapore had followed closely the Vienna talks on restoring the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA. Despite various recent challenges, the JCPOA remained an essential part of the international nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Singapore was therefore very concerned that some of its thresholds continued to be tested, in particular given that the Agency was unable to conduct surveillance and monitoring. His country hoped that all parties would redouble their efforts to reach an agreement and uphold their respective obligations under the JCPOA.

226. The recent developments in the DPRK were another cause for concern. The DPRK should immediately cease all provocations that could raise tensions on the Korean Peninsula and fully abide by its long standing international obligations and commitments, including under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Singapore took its obligations seriously and remained a strong advocate for meaningful engagement and constructive dialogue to resolve differences and promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. It looked forward to resuming that dialogue.

227. Singapore welcomed the Agency's continued work on ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine and upholding the Director General's 'seven pillars'. It appreciated the Director General's visits to nuclear facilities in Ukraine — most recently through the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya, during which he had led a team of experts across the frontlines. Noting the Director General's conclusion that the situation was untenable and that the armed conflict should end immediately in order to ensure the safety and security of the facilities and their personnel, Singapore called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a swift return to diplomacy for a peaceful settlement of the dispute in accordance with the UN Charter and international law. His country reiterated

its support for the Agency's efforts to ensure the safety and security of radioactive sources and was pleased to announce its commitment to the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, supplementary to the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

228. The TC programme remained a vital component of the Agency's work, assisting developing Member States — least developed countries and small island developing States in particular — to tackle evolving challenges and achieve their development goals. As the main vehicle through which the Agency provided such assistance to Member States, the programme must be sufficiently resourced. Singapore had hosted fellowship attachments and organized scientific visits, training workshops and other events in areas such as nuclear safety, regulatory law, medicine and radiation protection. It had renewed the Singapore–IAEA Third Country Training Programme and strengthened collaboration through the 2019 Practical Arrangements between the Agency and ASEAN. The CPF Singapore had signed in 2021 would guide its TC projects in priority areas such as nuclear and radiation safety and security, environmental monitoring, food safety, human health, energy and industry.

229. Mr AL JABRI (Oman), reiterating his country's readiness to continue cooperating with the Agency and with other Member States to achieve the Agency's goals in service of peace and development, said that nuclear science and technology had an important role in tackling current global challenges, including climate change, and in meeting the socioeconomic, development and energy needs of Member States, given their active contribution to human health, agricultural development, food safety and quality, environmental protection, water resources management and the increased effectiveness of industrial processes.

230. Oman made efforts to use nuclear science and technology to achieve sustainable development through its TC programme, which included projects on communicable and non-communicable disease testing and treatment, mutation breeding of important agricultural crops, and monitoring of radiological and other pollutants in food, water, soil and marine environments.

231. His country attached high importance to radiation protection and nuclear and radiation safety. During the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting, it had participated actively in reviewing actions to ensure the safety of radioactive waste and disused radioactive sources, in accordance with Agency guidance, which it applied voluntarily. The meeting had highlighted the importance of inclusive communication and engagement with civil society and all organizations concerned with radiation safety.

232. Oman had participated as an observer in the First A/CPPNM Conference, held in March 2022, at which the States Parties had adopted the outcome document by consensus and had agreed that the amended Convention was entirely adequate in order to meet the desired objectives. Those outcomes were a testament to the fact that the A/CPPNM, which covered the physical protection of nuclear material during transport, use and storage and also nuclear facilities, was essential for nuclear security and served all States, without exception, irrespective of whether or not they used or possessed nuclear material.

233. Given that strengthening global nuclear security was more important than ever, Oman had accepted the Amendment to the CPPNM, which had entered into force in the country on 28 June 2022. It was also strengthening its national capacities to combat nuclear terrorism and the illegal use of nuclear and other radioactive material, in cooperation with the Agency and the Office of Nuclear Safety of the US Department of Energy.

234. With Agency support, Oman was building the capacities of its professionals to ensure full compliance with its commitments under the agreements that it had signed with the Agency. It looked forward to receiving further Agency assistance, through COMPASS, to establish a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material.

235. Stressing the importance of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, Oman regretted the lack of consensus on the draft final document of the Tenth NPT Review Conference, held in New York in August 2022. That failure had squandered the efforts made towards the establishment of such a zone pursuant to the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

236. While emphasizing that the 1995 resolution, which provided for the indefinite extension of the NPT, would remain in effect until all its objectives had been achieved, Oman considered the convening of the first two sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in New York, pursuant to UN General Assembly decision 73/546, to be a step in the right direction. It looked forward to the third session, to be held under the presidency of Lebanon in November 2022, and encouraged further, swift action to ensure that all those efforts were not in vain.

237. Ms VILLATORO TARIO (El Salvador) said that her country was pleased that the 2022 Scientific Forum was dedicated to Rays of Hope — undoubtedly of great help to countries with little or no capacity to develop and strengthen their cancer control. El Salvador was very interested in being part of and benefiting from that initiative. It also supported ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastics, from which it was already benefiting.

238. El Salvador recognized the Agency's essential role in ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy and appreciated the technical cooperation provided through the TCF. The TC programme had contributed to El Salvador's economic and social progress, helping to develop national capacities in the use of nuclear science and technology in priority areas such as health, agriculture, the environment and food security.

239. El Salvador had concluded a CSA, an additional protocol and an SQP with the Agency and considered safeguards agreements to be an essential and reliable means of verifying the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It called on those States that had not yet signed safeguards agreements to agree to them being applied to all their nuclear activities. As a country that did not possess, produce, import or stockpile WMDs — indeed, the region was completely free of nuclear weapons — El Salvador reaffirmed its commitment and right to strive for nuclear disarmament as the only guarantee of peace, security and respect for human rights. Strongly supporting all instruments and initiatives aimed at nuclear non-proliferation and the general and complete disarmament of all WMDs, her country urged Member States to accede to the NPT and called on those possessing WMDs to take significant steps towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals. The Tenth NPT Review Conference had, for the second time in a row, failed to adopt a final document and recommendations.

240. As part of a group of countries convinced that nuclear energy should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, El Salvador condemned the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the conduct of experimental nuclear tests. Her country had therefore ratified the TPNW in January 2019 and, in June 2022, had participated in the first meeting of the States Parties in Vienna, which had adopted a political declaration stressing that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was a violation of international law, and a plan of action that established the framework for the Treaty's implementation.

241. The TPNW strengthened the Agency's safeguards system and supported the third pillar of the NPT and the Agency's Statute, emphasizing that nothing in the TPNW affected the inalienable right of its States Parties to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. Her country urged all States to sign the TPNW as soon as possible and to contribute to broader nuclear disarmament efforts in order to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world in which nuclear technology was used solely for peaceful purposes. El Salvador also encouraged States to sign or ratify

the CTBT. The NPT, CTBT and TPNW were complementary and contributed to the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

242. Mr KHADDOUR (Syrian Arab Republic), commending the Director General on his outstanding leadership, expressed his country's confidence that the Agency would continue to respond effectively to the growing needs of Member States so as to ensure the preservation of the global non-proliferation regime.

243. As the Agency's highest decision making body, the General Conference provided all Member States with an important platform to discuss the Agency's work and the challenges faced with the aim of ensuring that the Agency could continue to carry out its functions with complete independence, professionalism and neutrality and preventing it from being misdirected or used as a tool to further the narrow political agendas of certain States.

244. The Board of Governors' agenda item on the implementation of the safeguards agreement in his country was an example of such exploitation of the Agency by certain States. Israel's assault on Syrian territorial sovereignty in 2007 — which should have been roundly condemned — had been used as a platform to attack, demonize, blockade and exert political pressure on his country. After a decade of denial and lies, Israel's eventual acknowledgement of its responsibility for the assault should oblige the Agency to start sending inspection missions to Israel immediately. The continued discussion of the agenda item would serve no purpose as long as Israel remained uncooperative.

245. In contrast, Syria had cooperated with the Agency in a fully transparent and flexible way, including by agreeing an action plan to resolve the issue. In addition, the Agency's annual reports on safeguards implementation had confirmed that Syria fully complied with its CSA and the NPT and had met all periodic inspection requests on time, the most recent inspection having been carried out in May 2022 despite the impediments posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

246. Syria welcomed Iran's commitment to implementing the JCPOA, a diplomatic achievement that had been seriously jeopardized by the USA's unilateral and illegitimate withdrawal, in a flagrant breach of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The JCPOA contained rights and responsibilities and its successful implementation did not depend on Iran alone. All other participants must meet their obligations under the Plan, in particular those relating to the lifting of sanctions. Welcoming the positive atmosphere that had led to the Joint Statement issued by Iran and the Agency on 12 September 2021, Syria supported the continuation of bilateral talks between the two sides as the only way of putting the matter to bed.

247. General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities was a reflection of the international community's grave concern regarding the threat that the proliferation of nuclear weapons posed to the safety and stability of the Middle East. Through it, the General Conference had delivered the clear message that Israel should accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

248. Israel's conduct in the region and its continued possession of nuclear capabilities covered by neither the NPT nor a CSA posed a serious risk to the non-proliferation regime and threatened regional and international peace and security. As Israel not only refused to join the NPT or any other treaty on WMD disarmament but also possessed significant nuclear capabilities, it had no moral right to criticize cases of non-compliance with the NPT.

249. Israel continued to defy the international community, remaining outside the non-proliferation regime, and relied on the full backing of its allies, above all the USA, which applied double standards to non-proliferation when it came to Israeli nuclear capabilities. All other States in the region were committed to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Intensive

international action was needed to take practical steps to compel Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear State and achieve that goal.

250. Syria praised the Agency's vigorous global efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, which had hit many States hard. It was deeply grateful for the Agency's prompt provision of the necessary support and assistance, especially given the impact of the compulsory economic measures imposed unilaterally on the country by certain Member States. Those unjust and inhuman measures had prevented Syria from responding effectively to the pandemic and must be brought to an immediate end.

251. Having acceded to most international agreements on nuclear and radiation safety and security, Syria was currently considering acceding to other relevant agreements. It was also examining a bill on the secure exchange of nuclear and radiological material. Despite the unjust economic sanctions imposed on it, his country had paid its assessed contributions, successfully implemented a considerable number of national TC project components and contributed to many regional TC projects.

252. Syria welcomed PACT and looked forward to benefiting from the ZODIAC project and NUTEC Plastics. It also hoped for Agency support and assistance in replacing the fuel of its MNSR and establishing a centre in Aleppo for the production of radioisotopes with a short half-life. Looking forward to further Agency support for ARASIA, his country was pleased to host Agency training activities and stood ready to provide the necessary assurances for their success.

253. Mr HIKIHARA (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that there had been mention of the disposal of 'contaminated water' from Fukushima Daiichi NPP and said that a more appropriate term was 'ALPS-treated water'.

254. Ms KIM Ki Hyeon (Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the people of the Republic of Korea had growing concerns over the unconfirmed impact of discharging the contaminated water into the sea, especially since the construction of a system for its release had started. From an objective, scientific point of view, the contaminated water should be disposed of safely and the entire process should meet international standards. The relevant institutions and experts in her country would continue to participate in the Agency's monitoring and review, as well as holding substantial bilateral consultations with Japan on that matter.

255. Mr LI Sen (China), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Japan's own data indicated that the ALPS treatment method had not achieved the required results. More than 70% of the nuclear-contaminated water treated by ALPS still contained concentrations of radionuclides that exceeded the permissible limit for discharge. Japan had failed to prove that the water was safe and was attempting to conceal the danger by using the term 'treated water'. That would not fool the international community.

256. Mr HIKIHARA (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, emphasized that the entire process would be carried out in a safe and scientific manner and would be subject to strict review by the Agency. All relevant information had been made public and Japan would continue to provide all the necessary explanations and scientific evidence in close cooperation with the Agency, which was the sole authority on such issues.

257. Mr LI Sen (China), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Japan had chosen to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean for economic reasons, without fully demonstrating the feasibility of other disposal options. The Agency had not been able to assess those options either because of the limitations of its mandate, and it had so far failed to draw conclusions on Japan's discharge plans. It had, however, made many suggestions for improvements. Japan had nevertheless insisted on pushing ahead with the construction of the discharge facility, and the international community had every reason to question that approach. Collective briefings and bilateral

notifications should not be considered to constitute transparent, meaningful consultations and merely amounted to a unilateral decision imposed on others.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.