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President: Mr CORTESE (Italy)

Later: Mr LULASHNYK (Canada)

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Abbreviations used in this record

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
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
ARASIA	Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
AU-PATTEC	African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GNSSN	Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network
HEU	high enriched uranium
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
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
MeV	megaelectronvolt
MW	megawatt
NHSI	Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
ORPAS	Occupational Radiation Protection Appraisal Service
PSMA	prostate-specific membrane antigen
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
R&D	research and development
RANET	Response and Assistance Network
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UN	United Nations

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

USA	United States of America
VETLAB Network	Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Network
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

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

1. Mr TOM (Papua New Guinea) noted that his country was represented at the General Conference for the first time since becoming a Member State in 2012. Under its first CPF for 2016–2021, Papua New Guinea had been benefiting from a number of technical cooperation projects, which were aligned with the national priority areas of health and nutrition, agriculture and livestock, environmental protection and radiation safety and security. His Government would be signing a CPF for 2022–2027 on the margins of the General Conference.

2. The rising burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, in particular cancer and heart disease, placed great strain on the national health system, and new initiatives such as Rays of Hope were encouraging. His country was determined to continue its partnership with the Agency in health and nutrition, in particular to support the establishment of radiotherapy services, medical physics, and diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine infrastructure. It would be training local radiation oncologists and other radiation medicine specialists through the TC programme and was grateful to the Agency for the opportunity for three trainee radiation oncologists to receive training under the programme in Türkiye and Zambia. There was political and government support for investment in cancer care and action had been made to fund new cancer facilities in two provinces. His country was committed to fostering a much stronger partnership with the Agency to deliver on its targets.

3. Papua New Guinea continued to rely on the TC programme in such areas as human resources development, radiation medicine and radiation safety infrastructure, and safety standards. Over the previous four years, considerable progress had been made with respect to the legal and regulatory framework for nuclear safety: a new nuclear law and regulations had been developed and the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology had been designated as the radiation safety regulatory body. None of that would have been possible without the Agency, which continued provide support.

4. Pacific Island countries were among the most affected by climate change, which was not of their making. It was incumbent on high-emission economies to consider alternative energy sources such as nuclear energy to reduce their carbon emissions and meet their climate targets. Those economies also had a moral obligation to help restore the livelihoods of communities destroyed by climate change. In that regard, Papua New Guinea greatly appreciated the Agency's continued provision of support for small island developing States through its subregional approach to the Pacific Islands initiative and other dedicated programmes for addressing common challenges in the region.

5. Mr BACHIYSKI (Bulgaria) said that his country highly commended the Director General for his decisive leadership and Agency staff for their courage and determination, including during the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya.

6. Expressing deep concern at the severe threats to nuclear safety, security and safeguards posed by Russian military aggression in Ukraine, Bulgaria called for full implementation of the seven indispensable pillars for nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict in Ukraine and the immediate cessation of any attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes. His country welcomed the Director General's proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhya NPP and looked forward to the elaboration of the modalities to be agreed, which should respect Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. In that connection, he recalled

the 2009 General Conference decision², adopted by consensus, stating that any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constituted a violation of the principles of the UN Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency.

7. Bulgaria, which was strongly committed to furthering nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, regretted that an important opportunity to make tangible progress on all three pillars of the NPT had been missed during the Tenth NPT Review Conference. The Agency's safeguards system was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and a guarantee for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Efforts must continue to further strengthen its effectiveness and efficiency, in particular through the universalization of the CSA and the additional protocol.

8. Bulgaria reaffirmed its support for the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA and called on Iran to refrain from any further escalatory steps, reverse all activities inconsistent with the JCPOA and return, without further delay, to the full implementation of the Plan and of its obligations under its NPT safeguards agreement. The Agency's necessary oversight activities, including transparency measures under the JCPOA, should be restored. Complete and unconditional cooperation with the Agency was essential for Iran to demonstrate the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

9. The continuation of the DPRK's nuclear programme was a matter of concern. Bulgaria called on the DPRK to revert to full compliance with all its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations as a non-nuclear-weapon State, sign and ratify the CTBT and refrain from missile testing. His country also reiterated its full support for the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and all other WMDs and their delivery systems, as agreed by NPT States Parties.

10. With a combination of high technology, production efficiency, competitive pricing and a high level of nuclear safety, security and radiation protection, nuclear power remained a major component in the national energy mix. Bulgaria considered the safety and security of nuclear facilities a major factor in the development of nuclear energy. Units 5 and 6 of Kozloduy NPP had been operated in full compliance with the international safety standards in 2021, and activities to ensure the safe long term operation of those units continued, as confirmed by the SALTO peer review mission held in 2021.

11. Bulgaria's national report to the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting had been approved. His country had participated actively in the 2022 A/CPPNM Conference. As the only legally binding instrument in the area of nuclear security, the CPPNM was an important milestone, and Bulgaria was pleased that the States party had been able to form the necessary majority to call for another review conference.

12. Bulgaria had submitted its ninth national report under the CNS on time and looked forward to engaging in a constructive discussion on nuclear safety during the Joint Eighth and Ninth CNS Review Meeting in 2023. It commended the Agency's proactive role in nuclear safety, including through the SMR Regulators' Forum and the Agency-wide SMR Platform. It also welcomed the NHSI announced by the Director General and had participated in the launch meeting in June 2022.

13. Knowledge management was a key element in the safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities, and Bulgaria supported Agency initiatives promoting sustainable education and training in all areas of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. His Government had recently adopted a national strategy on human resource development in the nuclear sector for 2022–2032 to strengthen its human resource capacity and to address the lack of young professionals.

14. The TC programme was the Agency's key mechanism for addressing a wide range of Member State development needs through technology transfer and capacity building.

² GC(53)/DEC/13

All Member States should receive support through the programme upon request, according to their needs and on a non-discriminatory basis.

15. Under the 2022–2023 TC cycle, Bulgaria had started to implement three national TC projects in the areas of radiation protection, knowledge management and agriculture and was participating in more than 30 regional and interregional projects. It paid its annual contribution to the TCF in full and on time and, in support of developing countries, had also made a financial contribution to the ZODIAC initiative.

16. Mr EDRI (Israel) said that his country commended the Agency for continuing its core activities and striving to address the urgent needs of Member States, including through important initiatives such as Rays of Hope, NUTEC Plastics and ZODIAC, despite the exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. The ongoing unrest in the Middle East threatened global peace and security and required the attention of all Member States. One country was the leading factor in the instability of the region. It was now clear that Iran had conducted a military nuclear programme, gaining technology and knowledge, and had aimed to produce elements for a nuclear weapon device. Those activities had taken place in a number of undeclared sites and had involved various types of nuclear material.

18. Over the many years that the Agency had been investigating Iran's nuclear weapon programme, Iran had continuously failed to provide credible explanations or clarifications regarding the nature of its past clandestine nuclear activities and continued to deceive the Agency and the international community in that regard.

19. The Board's recent resolution condemning Iran's lack of cooperation with the Agency on long-outstanding questions reflected the growing international concern regarding the country's ill conduct. Moreover, Iran continued to develop, test and deploy long-range ballistic missiles, in direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions, and supported terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons was not an option that Israel, or the world, could tolerate.

20. Four out of five recognized cases of NPT violations had taken place in Middle Eastern countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria. The latter, in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations for more than a decade, had built an undeclared, clandestine military nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour. Such concealment of illicit nuclear activities was a severe violation of Syria's safeguards obligations, and the country's non-compliance and lack of cooperation were extremely dangerous. The international community should stand behind the Agency in its endeavour to obtain clear, conclusive answers from Syria.

21. Unfortunately, the Arab Group continued its efforts to use the General Conference to single out Israel. His country strongly objected to the annual inclusion of the politically driven item entitled "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" on the General Conference's agenda, as it contradicted the Agency's Statute and mandate, diverted the professional forum's attention from important issues and undermined the overall positive spirit in the region. Those acts were bound to fail.

22. It was more important than ever for nuclear safety and security to be a top global priority. Israel had participated actively in the first A/CPPNM Conference. The discussion on nuclear security was especially important in the light of recent events in Ukraine, given that threats to nuclear security and safety knew no boundaries.

23. Noting that nuclear research centres in his country had again been directly targeted in 2021, he said that the repeated and explicit threats by Iran and its proxies to attack Israel's nuclear facilities must not be ignored. Israel needed to continue to protect such facilities, which had been upgraded and strengthened in line with Agency safety standards to withstand any attack.

24. Israel attached great importance to the Agency's objectives and mission. It was an active participant in a wide range of Agency activities in safety, security, emergency response and technical cooperation, committing its best people to that work and benefiting from the Agency's knowledge and capabilities.

25. Israel hoped that the new spirit in the region, reflected in the Abraham Accords, would mark a path for meaningful direct dialogue, including on nuclear matters. It stood ready to share its knowledge and capabilities with others through the Agency. Israel looked forward to continuing its fruitful relationship with the Agency.

26. Mr BENCUN (Bosnia and Herzegovina) commended the Director General for his professionalism in steering the Agency through the current challenging times, including the war in Ukraine. His country was grateful to the Department of Technical Cooperation for the valuable assistance it had received, and to Member States for their extrabudgetary contributions. Bosnia and Herzegovina was strongly committed to deepening its future cooperation with the Agency.

27. Croatia's decision to select Čerkezovac in Trgovska Gora, close to the border with his country and to the Una national park, as a preferred location for the disposal of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel from Krško NPP was of concern and critical importance. Bosnia and Herzegovina was unanimous in its opposition to any radioactive waste disposal in the immediate vicinity of the border and would challenge the selection of the proposed site, which was considered by experts to pose a serious threat to the health of residents in 13 municipalities. Furthermore, the potential threat of devastating environmental impact and the high risk of earthquakes justified concerns that the location was not suitable. Although Croatia's limited inclusive and transparent engagement on the issue was regrettable, Bosnia and Herzegovina nonetheless looked forward to further constructive dialogue and to substantive involvement in all related activities. Combining the expertise of both countries would be beneficial in resolving the sensitive issue. With many questions raised and answered at the recent Joint Convention Review Meeting, Bosnia and Herzegovina remained committed to resolving the issue through bilateral and multilateral dialogue, including with the Agency's assistance, in a spirit of good neighbourly relations and mutual respect.

28. His country continued to support the Agency's mandates in radiation and nuclear safety and security, safeguards and verification. It would use the recommendations and suggestions from its IRRS mission in November 2022 to continue improving its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety, in accordance with Agency requirements and standards. It was currently hosting Agency safeguards inspectors and supported the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, emphasizing that the CSA and the additional protocol constituted the current verification standard under the NPT.

29. Bosnia and Herzegovina appreciated the GNSSN's efforts to strengthen radiation and nuclear safety capacities through education, training and the exchange of experience. It was an active member of the European and Central Asian Safety Network and coordinated the working group on regulatory infrastructure.

30. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina was not a nuclear country, it was committed to being a valuable Agency Member State and to implementing its international obligations. Effective multilateralism, mutual respect and a common vision for a better future were essential to overcome challenges.

31. Ms ASSOUMACOU (Madagascar) said that her country was grateful to the Agency for its efforts in nuclear safety and security. Madagascar had a long and productive history of technical cooperation with the Agency, which it was keen to continue to strengthen. Highlighting some areas of activity, she said that an interministerial committee had been set up to identify a suitable site for a radioactive waste

storage centre and her country looked forward to the Agency's logistical, technical and financial support in that endeavour. Several laboratories had also been established, including the National Institute for Nuclear Science and Technology, the Radioisotopes Laboratory, the National Centre for Environmental Research, the National Centre for Oceanographic Research and the National Centre for Applied Research in Rural Development.

32. Andohatapenaka University Hospital had received two gamma cameras and a laboratory for the diagnosis of thyroid cancer and cardiovascular events, and Joseph Ravoahangy Andrianavalona University Hospital had recently received a brachytherapy unit to treat certain cancers. In addition, with financial support from the Agency, Madagascar had developed *Striga*-resistant, climate-proof rice and maize seeds with a 50% higher agricultural yield.

33. The ministry responsible for energy had received special software for energy planning and training on its use. Furthermore, the ministry responsible for defence and customs had received training on nuclear security and portable equipment for the detection of illicit radioactive sources at border crossing points.

34. Technical cooperation with the Agency actively contributed to her country's emergence. In 2021 Madagascar had signed its sixth CPF, which sought to tackle the major challenges of food insecurity and drought, especially in the southern part of the island, and improve energy access.

35. There had been an alarming resurgence of malaria in coastal areas following the numerous cyclones during the year. She intended to meet with senior Agency officials in order to explore ways and means to establish and equip university laboratories to protect the population in rural areas.

36. Mr SALL (Senegal) said that his country remained committed to continued cooperation with the Agency in order to strengthen and uphold nuclear safety and security standards. The Senegalese Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority had benefited from Agency assistance in laying the foundations for a functional infrastructure and in renewing its legislative and regulatory framework.

37. His country appreciated the implementation of the Regulatory Infrastructure Development Project, which made it possible to integrate safety and security into a single assistance tool with several working languages. As the project facilitator, Senegal would continue to support the Agency in its implementation.

38. Senegal also welcomed the Design Safety Review Service project that aimed to assist Member States in strengthening their capacity to manage disused sources, including through the development of strategies. The continuing valuable support provided by the US Office of Radiological Security to strengthen the security of Senegal's central temporary storage site for disused sources was appreciated.

39. The Sahel region was becoming a haven for terrorists defeated in other parts of the world. Given the security situation and the porous borders, it was increasingly urgent to provide frontline States with equipment for detecting nuclear material and with protective equipment. Few African States were prepared to deal with a radiological attack.

40. The objectives of the Forum of Nuclear Safety and Security Authorities in G5 Sahel and Senegal included factoring nuclear security into the subregional security system and protecting and pooling resources. Despite the G5 Sahel no longer functioning as security experts would have wished, the Agency must continue its work in that unstable region in accordance with the memorandum signed with the G5 Sahel, aimed at strengthening a regional approach to nuclear security.

41. Turning to health, he thanked the Director General for appointing the President of Senegal as the champion of the Rays of Hope initiative. Following its launch in February 2022, Benin, Chad, Kenya,

Malawi, the Niger and Senegal had been chosen to participate in the first phase of the initiative; seven other countries would follow, and six more had expressed interest in participating.

42. The support of impACT and WHO in developing Senegal's new national cancer control strategic plan for 2023–2026 was appreciated. Implementation was expected to be greatly facilitated by the upcoming construction of the Diamniadio national oncology centre and the provision of modern radiotherapy infrastructure for public hospitals.

43. With Agency support under regional project RAF/1/009, Senegal and seven other African countries would establish essential national research reactor infrastructure for use in such areas as health, agriculture, R&D, training and education. His country also welcomed the results achieved in tsetse fly control in the Niayes region, and was grateful for the support of the Agency, the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre, and the USA through the PUI.

44. Plastic waste management was a priority for his country. It welcomed the NUTEC Plastics initiative and had set up a team of experts to work with the Agency in that area under the regional TC project RAF/1/010. It also appreciated the Agency's support in establishing a national environmental metrology laboratory.

45. Welcoming the ZODIAC project, Senegal thanked the Agency for the confidence placed in it through the signing of a partnership agreement for zoonotic disease training with the Pasteur Institute of Dakar. The previous week, thanks to France's contribution and close collaboration between the Agency and Senegalese experts, the Institute had hosted the first ZODIAC regional training course, focused on the verification of standard operating procedures for new serological and molecular techniques for 25 participants from French-speaking African Member States.

46. Human capacity building — a vital complement in technology transfer — should remain a top Agency priority. Senegal appreciated AFRA's support in developing and implementing a national nuclear education and training strategy. It hoped that Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar would soon be designated an Agency reference centre for nuclear medicine and radiotherapy.

47. Senegal had established the Senegalese Young Generation in Nuclear and a national chapter of Women in Nuclear to increase the involvement of young people and women in nuclear science and technology, and would be inviting the Agency to the official launch.

48. With Senegal having just completed its term on the Board, it thanked the African Group for its confidence, fellow Board members for the productive exchanges, and the Secretariat and the Chair of the Board for their strong and effective support. The spirit of Vienna must be maintained if the Agency was to remain the technical arm of the UN system for the peaceful use of nuclear technology and continue to build international peace and security. If that spirit prevailed, he was confident that a nuclear safety and security zone would quickly be established around Zaporizhzhya NPP and other Ukrainian facilities in order to avoid a nuclear catastrophe, the consequences of which would spare no country. If the same spirit of surmounting obstacles, constantly seeking consensus and assuming responsibility permeated the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme, the international community would undoubtedly overcome the issue, which increasingly threatened peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond.

49. Senegal remained firmly committed to the Agency's ideals of peace and development and would participate actively in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in strengthening the Agency's monitoring and verification regime.

50. Mr SHOJA'AADIN (Yemen), praising the Secretariat's substantial efforts to achieve the noble purposes for which the Agency had been founded, said that his country continued to benefit from the TC programme and hoped to continue to do so despite the difficulties posed by the coup conducted by

Iranian-backed Houthi militias in Yemen. The TC programme was the mechanism through which the Agency could provide resources, services and equipment to meet needs regarding research, development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. He expressed his country's thanks to the Agency, and in particular the Department of Technical Cooperation, for its substantial efforts to continue supporting TC projects in Yemen, especially in the areas of cancer treatment, agriculture and livestock, science and technology, and training. Yemen looked forward to receiving further support from the Agency in those areas, especially as part of the ZODIAC initiative.

51. His Government was grateful for the substantial support provided by the Agency for establishing Yemen's first cancer radiotherapy centre and a nuclear medicine unit. Further Agency support would be needed to tackle the country's increasing cancer rates and set up cancer treatment centres in a number of governorates. The Agency should keep working to find alternatives and means for ensuring the continuation of TC projects in countries such as his where exceptional circumstances prevailed.

52. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of ARASIA, Yemen commended the work of its presidency and secretariat to promote technical cooperation between the member States and provide training opportunities in line with States' needs, under the oversight of the Agency.

53. Yemen was following with interest the discussions between the JCPOA participants. Iran's failure to take the discussions seriously was alarming. Iran appeared to be playing for time, by raising other issues relating to its legally binding international commitments under the NPT and its safeguards agreement with the Agency. By dragging out the discussions, Iran could be giving itself the time to develop its non-peaceful nuclear programme, meaning that any new agreement with Iran would be pointless. Any new agreement with Iran must include measures to relieve all concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme, its ballistic missile programme and its interference in the affairs of other States in the region. It was unacceptable that Iran was exploiting the current discussions on the JCPOA to avoid its obligations under its CSA and undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The fact that the Agency was not in a position to confirm the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme placed the international community in a situation where it was impossible to ignore the threat posed by Iran.

54. Yemen endorsed all steps taken by the Agency to strengthen the nuclear security system in order to prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to nuclear material. His country likewise backed all initiatives aimed at ending the proliferation of nuclear weapons and establishing WMD-free zones, especially in the Middle East. Having welcomed the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction held pursuant to UN General Assembly decision 73/546, Yemen looked forward to the third session and encouraged all States to participate and contribute to its success.

55. All Arab States had acceded to the NPT and stressed their continued readiness to establish a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. In contrast, Israel persistently refused to accede to the Treaty or place all its nuclear facilities under a CSA. It also continued to reject all international initiatives to universalize the NPT in the Middle East, thereby exacerbating instability and insecurity in what was a sensitive region.

Mr Lulashnyk (Canada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

56. Mr OBRADOVIĆ (Serbia) expressed his country's appreciation to the Agency for its assistance, particularly in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agency's donation of equipment for four specialized RT-PCR units for COVID-19 testing in humans had substantially expanded Serbia's capacity to rapidly detect infection carriers. Through its provision of similar assistance to more than 100 countries worldwide, the Agency had once again demonstrated its continuous commitment to

working for the benefit of all humanity. The global challenges resulting from the pandemic could only be overcome through a joint and allied approach, and his country stood ready to play its part.

57. Serbia remained fully committed to the Agency's fundamental principles and goals. It would continue to be a constructive partner in all Agency programmes and efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime and nuclear safeguards in line with the NPT. His country attached priority to combating nuclear terrorism and would continue to work with the international community to deter the illegal trade in nuclear material and other radiation sources, especially through their proper physical protection and the retrieval of orphan sources.

58. Serbia was committed to steadily developing its legislative and regulatory framework for radiation and nuclear safety and security in line with international standards and the EU acquis. It would therefore continue to support the Secretariat's attempts to enhance international standards and relevant international legal documents.

59. His country's prime concerns were the protection of public health and the environment, and the assurance that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It would continue to fulfil its obligations arising from relevant international conventions and to apply the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources as a non-legally binding instrument and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources, owing to their importance in enhancing the safety and security of radiation sources.

60. Serbia attached great importance to the Agency's technical assistance, which had proved invaluable, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was confident that, despite the challenging circumstances, its current national, regional and interregional TC projects would be completed successfully.

61. He concluded by expressing Serbia's full support for the Agency's Annual Report for 2021 and the programme and budget for 2022, and by reaffirming its commitment to the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

62. Mr VYAS (India), noting that the initial IRRS mission to his country in 2015 had covered only NPPs, said that the follow-up mission in June 2022 had reviewed the regulatory framework for radiation source facilities and activities.

63. With regard to power applications, he said that Indian nuclear power reactors had been setting records in long continuous operation, with some units having operated continuously for more than a year 39 times. Excavation work had commenced for Kaiga Units 5 and 6 — the first pair of 700 MW PHWRs being constructed in fleet mode.

64. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre had remained at the forefront in advancing non-power applications through scientific research on applications of radioisotopes and radiation in agriculture, medicine and industry. Furthermore, the Heavy Water Board — the largest global producer of heavy water — had exported heavy water to Japan, the Republic of Korea and the USA.

65. The Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research was the R&D hub for the development of challenging fast breeder reactor technology. The Fast Breeder Test Reactor core had incorporated unique features for flux flattening and ensuring shut-down margins. The closure of the carbide fuel cycle had also been demonstrated successfully.

66. In a joint venture with the Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology, the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre had started the commercial production and supply ⁶⁸Ga-PSMA-11, a radiopharmaceutical for prostate cancer management, using the 30 MeV medical cyclotron.

67. As part of its collaboration with ITER on fusion technology development, the Institute for Plasma Research had supplied the worksite in France with approximately 4 km of cryolines, and some 6 km of return lines for warm gases. The Institute had also helped to finish assembling the top lid sectors of the ITER tokamak cryostat.

68. Noting that the Tata Memorial Centre had been at the forefront of efforts to enhance India's cancer treatment facilities, he said that the first allogeneic and paediatric bone marrow transplantations in north-east India had been completed. In June 2022, a patient in India had received indigenously developed CAR T-cell therapy for the first time.

69. As a founding member of the RCA, India extended its heartiest congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the agreement.

70. Grateful to the city of Vienna and the Government of Austria for hosting the Agency, India remained committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

71. Mr LINTILÄ (Finland) expressed his country's full support for the Agency's work and commended the Director General and Agency's staff for their independence and professionalism.

72. Finland supported the Agency's work regarding nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. The situation was especially critical at Zaporizhzhya NPP, Europe's largest nuclear facility, which had been attacked and illegally seized by the Russian Federation. Such actions were unacceptable, and the Russian Federation must immediately withdraw all its armed forces from Ukrainian nuclear facilities.

73. It was regrettable that a consensus outcome had not been reached at the Tenth NPT Review Conference, and efforts to strengthen the Treaty must continue. The Agency's safeguards system put the NPT into practice; it was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and important for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As part of Finland's efforts to strengthen safeguards globally, the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority was considering launching an ambitious five-year programme with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy in 2023.

74. Major proliferation challenges persisted and Finland welcomed all diplomatic efforts to revive the JCPOA. It hoped that Iran would resume its implementation of the Plan, including all transparency measures.

75. His country continued to provide financial and in-kind support for the Agency's essential role in nuclear security activities.

76. Finland was making history as the first country to start the deep geological disposal of spent nuclear fuel in the mid-2020s. The creation of functional safeguards for the back end of the fuel cycle with the Agency and the European Commission was an essential element in that regard.

77. Turning to the global challenge of climate change, he said that Finland aimed to be carbon neutral by 2035. Not only did it have a long tradition in the use of nuclear power, but its energy mix also included one of the highest proportions of renewables in Europe, demonstrating that nuclear energy and renewable energy were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, nuclear power was important for energy security and he noted that Unit 3 of Olkiluoto NPP was currently in the test production phase.

78. As it entered its second year on the Board, Finland would continue to support the Agency's independent expert work under its core mandate, and efforts to boost the use of new technologies, especially SMRs.

79. Mr TIDOW (Germany), thanking the Director General and the Agency's staff for their steadfast commitment, said that his country strongly endorsed the 'seven pillars' as the baseline of joint efforts for ensuring nuclear safety and security during armed conflict. Germany called on the Russian Federation to immediately restore full control of Zaporizhzhya NPP to its rightful sovereign owner, Ukraine.

80. Germany remained profoundly concerned about the seizure of Ukrainian nuclear facilities and other actions by Russian armed forces that posed a serious threat to safety and security, significantly increased the risk of a nuclear accident or incident and endangered the population of Ukraine, neighbouring states and the international community. The Agency must be given safe and unimpeded access to all nuclear facilities in Ukraine and able to engage directly and without interference with the Ukrainian personnel responsible for their operation. The personal safety of all individuals involved in those efforts must be guaranteed and all Member States were encouraged to support the Agency's actions.

81. His Government would continue its bilateral long term commitment to enhance nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and stood ready to support the Agency in its efforts. The Federal Office for Radiation Protection had carried out large-scale radiological measurements in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in 2021 and had established good and close cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities before the war. It went without saying that Germany would continue to support Ukraine with measuring and personal protective equipment as part of the request for assistance under RANET.

82. In the security field, the development of new security guidance was the Agency's central task. Worrying developments in computer security had highlighted the need for well-trained experts to support critical infrastructures.

83. Germany was grateful to Agency safeguards inspectors, who continued to carry out their work reliably under increasingly difficult conditions. It also emphasized that, in addition to ageing management, there was a need to consider safety, security and safeguards in relation to innovative reactors and SMRs.

84. Although Germany deemed nuclear power to be an unsustainable and high-risk technology and had therefore decided to phase out its commercial use, it respected each country's right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and remained committed to ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear power.

85. Germany had served on the Board since 1973 and would continue its robust, expert involvement in the Agency's work. It would remain strongly supportive of the Agency's efforts to advance nuclear safety standards and security guidelines and of its safeguards and verification activities. His country was the fourth largest contributor to the Agency's budget and the TCF and the largest contributor through the European Union. It also contributed to the NSF, made extrabudgetary contributions and had been actively assisting the Agency in the application of safeguards for more than 40 years through its Member State Support Programme.

86. Germany supported the TC programme in the areas of health and nutrition, food and agriculture, water and the environment. In order to facilitate access to non-power applications, especially in the poorest countries, the Agency should coordinate closely with the UN development agencies. As a co-chair of the Friends of ReNuAL, Germany would continue to support the Agency's nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf and was preparing a considerable contribution for their training courses.

87. While his country remained fully committed to restoring the JCPOA, it was deeply concerned about Iran's escalating nuclear programme, many aspects of which lacked any credible civilian justification. It appreciated the Agency's professional verification and monitoring activities in Iran,

and called on that country to cooperate substantially with the Agency, with a view to clarifying and resolving the outstanding safeguards-related issues.

88. Germany welcomed the Agency's efforts to enhance its readiness to verify the DPRK's nuclear programme, once the political conditions allowed, and stood ready to support the process.

89. Lastly, Germany had full trust in the Agency's ability to handle new situations such as AUKUS and supported the Director General's approach to working with the interested parties on that complex, technical matter.

90. Mr DADA (Nigeria) said that his country appreciated the Director General's consistent efforts to respond to Member States' requests and implement approved programmes and projects, despite the financial impact of the global economic downturn and COVID-19 restrictions. Nigeria supported the Agency's programmes and projects and noted the summary of results achieved for each Major Programme in 2020–2021 and the Annual Report for 2021. It also endorsed the report on strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications and the Technical Cooperation report for 2021.

91. Nothing the AFRA TC projects implemented during the reporting period, Nigeria welcomed the review of the AFRA agreement and expressed support for its full implementation, as envisaged by the AFRA Regional Strategic Cooperative Framework for 2019–2023.

92. TC activities in Nigeria were being implemented in such areas as industrial applications and preventative maintenance, capacity building in medical fields and improved safety and effectiveness of medical equipment, and radiation technologies, including for the management of coastal infrastructure. His country also received Agency assistance in strengthening radioactive waste management and radiopharmacy services in Africa, enhancing the capacity of national regulatory bodies, strengthening food safety, increasing the competitiveness of agricultural exports and integrating the SIT with other suppression methods.

93. Nigeria requested the Agency to conduct more projects and programmes in Member States, in line with their needs and to implement, as soon as possible, its national programmes and activities that had not yet been carried out. It requested the Agency to ensure the full implementation of TC programmes on nuclear power, including the enhancement of NPPs and the launch and expansion of nuclear power programmes, especially in developing Member States.

94. His country supported the strengthening of the Agency's TC activities and called on other Member States to do likewise, including by paying their assessed contributions on time. Nigeria had made extrabudgetary contributions towards the ReNuAL projects and paid its TCF and AFRA contributions and was making further efforts to increase that support. It also supported the Agency's cross-cutting projects, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics and Rays of Hope.

95. His country noted with appreciation the achievements in the use of non-power nuclear applications to enhance human health; improve agricultural produce, food security and water resources; and tackle environmental pollution. That work represented another milestone in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

96. The ORPAS mission to Nigeria in July 2022 had visited pre-identified facilities in Abuja, Lagos and Ibadan representative of typical practices and activities. Positive points noted by the mission included good occupational radiation protection enforcement mechanisms; the national dose registry; stakeholder involvement in regulation development; technical service provider and advisory service authorization; external and in-country radiation safety training; the radiation protection programme and

quality management system; a good documentation system and safety culture; and the radiation warning system in the local language.

97. Nigeria appreciated the Agency's efforts to coordinate with WHO and other international organizations to continue providing assistance to Member States, despite the COVID-19 restrictions. It recognized the Agency's efforts to validate COVID-19 detection kits and the 51 VETLAB Network laboratories supporting the diagnostic testing. His country noted that the Agency had supported more than 300 medical and veterinary laboratories to help Member States combat the pandemic, and that 2036 consignments of equipment and supplies had been delivered to 129 countries and territories.

98. Nigeria also thanked the Agency for increasing capacity building and technical cooperation among Member States in order to control tsetse fly, develop trypanosomosis strategies and integrate the SIT into the area-wide integrated pest management campaign in Africa. The Agency's support under the regional TC project on supporting area-wide tsetse and trypanosomosis management to improve livestock productivity and its efforts to continue strengthening collaboration with AU-PATTEC were appreciated.

99. Nigeria was pleased to be participating in Rays of Hope and thanked the Director General for meeting with senior officials to discuss possible collaboration and cancer management, in particular radiation therapy and positron emission tomography centres.

100. Nigeria requested further support from the Agency on nuclear power programmes, Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, and the Internet Reactor Laboratory for training and education. In view of its strategic location, it hoped to become the Agency's training hub for the subregion.

101. Ms MARKOVIC (Sweden), noting that the meeting was taking place at a pivotal time in the Agency's history, said that the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine was a grave violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and was aggravated by the fact that the Russian Federation was a nuclear-weapon State and a member of the Security Council and the Board. The Agency reported daily breaches of the 'seven pillars'. Its ability to draw safeguards conclusions for Ukraine, which had been limited since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, would be further compromised unless the situation improved soon.

102. Since the invasion, Sweden had significantly increased its nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine bilaterally and with other partners and had delivered important nuclear safety equipment in cooperation with Finland and Norway. Her country applauded the active Agency assistance provided to Ukraine, notably the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya, and welcomed the continued presence of Agency experts at the facility. Pending the Russian Federation's full withdrawal from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, Sweden supported discussions on modalities for a safety and security protection zone that would respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

103. Sweden was deeply concerned about the signs of expanded enrichment and reprocessing activities and preparations for another nuclear weapon test in the DPRK. Those actions undermined regional and international peace and security and could further heighten tensions. Sweden once again called on the DPRK to fulfil its international commitments and undertake the complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, without further delay, and to immediately cease all related activities, in accordance with Security Council and General Conference resolutions. Her country had facilitated diplomatic dialogue towards peace on the Korean Peninsula on several occasions and remained firmly committed in that endeavour.

104. The situation in Iran represented a serious challenge to the safeguards system and the global non-proliferation regime. Iran's rapid expansion of enrichment capacity and its stockpiling of enriched uranium, including HEU, with no plausible civilian application, was of serious concern.

Iran's imposition of limitations on the Agency's verification authority and its unwillingness to engage in meaningful consultations on open safeguards issues were likewise troubling. Sweden called on Iran to accept the European Union's latest package proposal so that the JCPOA could finally be restored. A return to the full and effective implementation of the Plan would ensure sanctions relief and strengthen regional and international peace and security.

105. In the current, severely deteriorated security environment, it was more important than ever to protect the integrity of the NPT. It was deeply regrettable that the Russian Federation had blocked consensus at the Tenth NPT Review Conference. Despite that setback, however, the NPT remained a cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and Sweden stressed the continued validity of treaty obligations and commitments made in earlier outcome documents.

106. Sweden recognized the importance of keeping the Nuclear Security Series relevant and updated in order to help Member States implement the A/CPPNM and would remain engaged in that regard. Her country looked forward to comprehensive follow-up to set implementation targets for the second A/CPPNM Conference, which it hoped would leave more room for a structured exchange of views on implementation.

107. Earlier in 2022, Sweden had reached a milestone in its nuclear waste management programme when the Government had approved the construction of a deep geological repository for the final disposal of spent nuclear fuel, and a construction licence for an encapsulation plant. Those achievements were the result of unique political and municipal engagement and had been recognized as good practice at the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting. All delegates were invited to attend the side event on the topic to be held by her country and Finland.

108. Six nuclear power reactors remained in operation in Sweden, providing almost a third of domestic electricity production and seven others were undergoing decommissioning by immediate dismantling. Operational and regulatory control activities were financed through the national Nuclear Waste Fund.

109. Sweden, which strongly supported the Agency's peer review missions, was due to receive its second IRRS mission in November 2022 and its first ARTEMIS mission in April 2023. It appreciated the work of the Peer Review and Advisory Services Committee to enhance efficiency through combined and back-to-back missions.

110. The Agency continued to make important contributions to Member States' development goals and the 2030 Agenda through the promotion of nuclear applications for peaceful use. Sweden called on all Member States to pay their assessed contributions to the TCF on time and in full. In 2022, her country had provided extrabudgetary contributions through the PUI to Rays of Hope to combat cancers in women and to NUTEC Plastics.

111. Sweden was pleased that the percentage of women in the Professional and higher categories now exceeded 40%. It encouraged the Secretariat to continue promoting gender equality, while also paying due attention to other measures, including gender mainstreaming in its policies and organizational practices.

112. Mr GUNAAJAV (Mongolia) said that his country highly appreciated the Agency's tireless efforts to address new global challenges relating to nuclear safety, climate change, energy, food and public health, ensure safeguards and provide much needed capacity building assistance to Member States.

113. Mongolia was fully committed to its obligations under the NPT, its Agency safeguards agreement and the additional protocol and would continue to work closely with the Agency on safeguards implementation. Pursuant to a parliamentary resolution of June 2015 aimed at further strengthening the country's nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia had taken appropriate measures to accede to the A/CPPNM, the CNS and the Joint Convention and to conclude a small quantities protocol. It was also

working to amend its Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan on the basis of Agency recommendations and adhered to Agency standards and recommendations to develop its radiation protection and safety infrastructure and improve its national legal framework.

114. His Government had established a working group to study the possibility of using nuclear energy, which was critical in the fight against global warming and climate change. Mongolia was also preparing to receive an Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review mission in the near future.

115. Mongolia intended to exploit its radioactive mineral resources to support its development, and it looked forward to working with the Agency to implement the recommendations from the May 2022 Uranium Production Site Appraisal Team review mission. That would make a significant contribution to the exploration, mining and processing of those minerals using environmentally friendly technologies and to the strengthening of the Mongolian legal and regulatory framework.

116. Mongolia fully supported the Agency's role and engagement in achieving the SDGs and appreciated its efforts to build the capacity of Member States in the safe use of nuclear technology through the TC programme. The projects implemented under Mongolia's CPF for 2016–2021, including in the areas of health, food, agriculture, science, geology and mining, had contributed significantly to national development. His country looked forward to continued cooperation with the Agency for the successful implementation of the CPF for 2022–2027. Mongolia would actively support ZODIAC, Rays of Hope and NUTEC Plastics and thanked the Agency for providing emergency assistance in the form of 500 000 doses of vaccine to prevent lumpy skin disease outbreaks.

117. Mongolia remained fully committed to expanding its close cooperation with the Agency, fulfilling its obligations as a Member State and actively participating in Agency activities.

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

118. Mr HORVATIĆ (Croatia) said that his country was profoundly grateful to the Agency and the Director General for their efforts to stabilize global nuclear safety and security, notably in connection with the extremely serious situation in Ukraine. It was particularly impressed by the outstanding courage and determination of the Agency's expert team in its mission to Zaporizhzhya NPP.

119. The Russian invasion of Ukraine had led to the unprecedented shelling of an active NPP, and to the destruction of the infrastructure required to connect it to the electrical grid. The NPP had continued to operate, all while being occupied, used to station military units and carry out offensive activities. That undermined all nuclear safety principles and infinitely increased the possibility of a nuclear accident and radiological contamination, with cross-border impact.

120. Using NPPs and other sites for military purposes and as means of intimidation and blackmail was intolerable and inexcusable. Attacks on Zaporizhzhya, Chernobyl, Kharkiv and other nuclear sites across Ukraine seriously undermined the security of all countries. The Russian Federation must act responsibly and join the international community in treating nuclear sites as demilitarized zones. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine had also had a severe negative impact on climate change in Europe and beyond, and had disrupted global energy and food supply chains.

121. It was therefore clear that Member States must strengthen the resilience and protection of critical infrastructure in the energy, information and communication technology, transport, health, food supply and public service sectors; ensure the safe transport of dangerous substances; and protect cultural values.

122. Although the European Union had undertaken the strictest measures against the Russian Federation, in full accordance with international law, the energy independence of individual EU member States remained questionable. For the purposes of taxonomy, the European Union had labelled nuclear energy as green and, in the light of the dependency on Russian energy imports, was

accelerating NPP fuel supply diversification. Ensuring the highest standards of nuclear safety and security remained a priority.

123. Turning to national issues, he noted that Croatia's cooperation with the Agency remained exemplary. The Agency's assistance in implementing international standards to improve radiological and nuclear safety in Croatia and surrounding countries was appreciated. In 2022, Croatia had been working intensively to improve the related regulatory framework by implementing its international commitments and the recommendations of the IRRS follow-up mission.

124. The CPF for 2020–2025 identified radiological and nuclear safety and security, food and agriculture, health, water and environment, and energy and industry as priority areas for technical cooperation with the Agency. Three national projects had been proposed for the 2024–2025 TC cycle, and Croatian scientists and experts were also involved in several regional projects in accordance with CPF priorities.

125. Croatia had participated in the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting and had submitted its ninth national report for the upcoming Joint Eighth and Ninth CNS Review Meeting. His country was prepared to host an ARTEMIS peer review mission in June 2023 to assess national radioactive waste, disused sealed radioactive sources and spent fuel management, and the relevant regulatory framework.

126. Croatia was committed to continuing its close cooperation with the Agency and its successful bilateral cooperation with its neighbours, Slovenia and Hungary, especially on the timely exchange of information in the event of a radiological emergency.

127. Mr LAGGNER (Switzerland), commended the Director General's leadership and the Secretariat's high-quality work. Switzerland strongly condemned the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine and the attack on Zaporizhzhya NPP, which posed a serious threat to the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities and could lead to a nuclear accident or incident. His country called for the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces, and stressed that all parties to the conflict must respect the special protection granted to NPPs.

128. Thanks to the Agency's tireless efforts, it had finally been possible to conduct the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya. Switzerland strongly supported the 'seven pillars', which must be observed in all circumstances. It endorsed the proposed nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhya NPP and the Agency's continued presence at the plant.

129. The preservation of the JCPOA remained crucial for global nuclear non-proliferation and international security, and Switzerland urged those concerned to swiftly conclude the negotiations. Iran's decision to suspend the provisional application of its additional protocol and to cease implementing other transparency measures was of grave concern, as those actions had a serious impact on the Agency's ability to verify the exclusively civilian nature of Iran's activities and to maintain continuity of knowledge. Switzerland was deeply troubled about Iran's lack of cooperation on open safeguards matters, and called on it to cooperate immediately and constructively with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues.

130. The continuation of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, remained of deep concern. Switzerland urged the DPRK to take tangible steps towards abandoning its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and to cease all related activities. It also called on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues concerning Dair Alzour and all related sites.

131. Switzerland supported efforts to further optimize the safeguards system in order to ensure the best possible use of the Agency's limited resources. It had joined the Member State Support Programme in 2021 to help the Agency tackle future challenges in nuclear verification.

132. Switzerland had had the honour of serving as one of the co-presidents of the first A/CPPNM Conference and thanked the Secretariat for its excellent support. The successful conference had adopted an important Final Document by consensus and had contributed to the universalization of the CPPNM and its Amendment. The request of a majority of Parties to convene a second review conference laid the groundwork for a strengthened and sustainable treaty regime.

133. Switzerland welcomed the steady increase in the number of countries receiving international peer review missions in nuclear safety and security and encouraged all Member States to host such missions regularly. His country was currently implementing the findings of its 2021 IRRS mission and would receive an IPPAS follow-up mission in 2023.

134. Switzerland hoped that the Joint Eighth and Ninth CNS Review Meeting would achieve ambitious results that further strengthened the effective implementation of the CNS and the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety.

135. His country thanked the Agency for its valuable support during the Swiss Presidency of the Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting. The Contracting Parties had discussed a number of cross-cutting issues related to the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management and had adopted a number of changes to procedural mechanisms to make the peer review process more efficient and effective.

136. The Agency's activities in nuclear science, technology and applications were essential for achieving the SDGs. The Practical Arrangements to be concluded between the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology and the Agency on the margins of the General Conference would enable cooperation on aquifer vulnerability mapping in Africa and would include specialized noble gas analysis.

137. The recent announcement by Switzerland's National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (Nagra) of the site chosen for the planned construction of a deep geological repository for radioactive waste was an important project milestone. Nagra would start preparing the general licence applications, and the competent federal safety authorities would then conduct a detailed examination of the files. The repository was currently expected to become operational in 2050.

138. Mr KACOU (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his country congratulated the Agency on the remarkable work accomplished despite the global disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic during the preceding two years.

139. His country was concerned about the serious nuclear safety and security risks to Zaporizhzhya NPP and their incalculable consequences. It was deeply committed to the promotion of dialogue and to international peace and security, and welcomed the Agency's courageous and worthwhile mission to the nuclear facility, led by the Director General, and renewed its full confidence in him.

140. Côte d'Ivoire remained fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, the peaceful use of atomic energy, and to strengthening international security. In 2019 and 2020 it had ratified the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions. Furthermore, in July 2022, it had agreed to accept the revised AFRA Agreement.

141. Public health had been made a priority in the national development plan 2021–2025. Considerable efforts were being made to strengthen the national system for cancer surveillance, analysis and treatment to ensure quality care for patients from Côte d'Ivoire and the subregion. Thanks to Agency support, it had opened a national oncology and radiotherapy centre in December 2017 and had established the Abidjan Institute of Nuclear Medicine. With financial support

from the Republic of Korea, it was building another national oncology and radiotherapy centre in Grand-Bassam.

142. His country had received protective and laboratory equipment and diagnostic kits worth some €78 000 from the Agency to tackle COVID-19. It was grateful for the Agency's valuable cooperation and multifaceted assistance through the TC programme to support activities in agriculture, environmental protection, scientific research, energy planning, animal production and health, radiopharmacy, radiation therapy, radiation protection and, above all, nuclear medicine.

143. Given the rising incidence of cancer, especially in Africa, his country fully supported the Rays of Hope initiative. The 2022 Scientific Forum: "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All" would provide an opportunity for countries to benefit from information in areas such as capacity building, diagnosis and research to help tackle the disease.

144. Although some progress had been made in infrastructure development, considerable challenges in cancer prevention and treatment persisted. Côte d'Ivoire therefore sought Agency support in its priority areas for 2022–2027, namely: to strengthen radiological and nuclear security infrastructure; and improve human health and nutrition, animal production, national capacities for food safety and quality control, and energy planning.

145. Noting the contribution of nuclear security to international peace and security, Côte d'Ivoire strongly endorsed all Agency initiatives to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies for development and human well-being.

146. Mr MARXER (Liechtenstein) said that the General Conference was taking place in an extremely challenging international environment marked by conflicts and crises and their multi-faceted, far-reaching consequences, including for energy security.

147. Liechtenstein strongly condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which constituted a blatant violation of the principles of the UN Charter and the international order founded upon it. In addition to the unspeakable human suffering and the destruction of civil infrastructure, the Russian Federation's actions threatened the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities and had impeded the Agency's full and safe conduct of safeguards verification activities in Ukraine.

148. Liechtenstein shared the deep concerns that each of the 'seven pillars' had been compromised as a result of the Russian aggression. The attacks at and near Ukraine's nuclear facilities had significantly increased the risk of a nuclear incident or accident, with potentially catastrophic consequences for human health and the environment. Commending the Agency's significant efforts in connection with Zaporizhzhya NPP, his country fully supported the Agency's work to assist Ukraine in ensuring nuclear safety and security and to maintain Agency safeguards on all nuclear materials and activities.

149. The Agency's role in the peaceful use of nuclear energy was of crucial importance. Highlighting the Agency's verification and monitoring in Iran and the application of safeguards in the DPRK, he emphasized that all Member States must ensure full and timely cooperation with the Agency in order to uphold the integrity and effectiveness of the global safeguards and non-proliferation regime.

150. Recent developments had posed serious challenges to the rules-based international order, and it was essential to ensure that international organizations, including the Agency, remained operational and responsive, and that the challenges were addressed multilaterally. Member States had a joint responsibility to ensure the smooth functioning of the Agency's Policy-Making Organs. As co-chair of the Western Europe Group, Liechtenstein had contributed to that goal in 2022 and would continue to do so.

151. Mr HUSEYNOV (Azerbaijan), commending the Agency's professional and valuable work, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had proved once again the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation. With its almost universal membership, advanced scientific approaches and practical assistance tools, the Agency had demonstrated that it was well positioned to effectively and efficiently address global challenges.

152. Azerbaijan welcomed the Agency's progressive initiatives to expand the use of nuclear science and technology to address the most pressing global challenges in important areas such as climate change adaptation; food and water security; zoonotic disease response; cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment; materials development to control cellular biological processes; environmental pollution prevention; green energy transition; and resistant crop development.

153. Through its technical cooperation with the Agency, Azerbaijan had successfully introduced peaceful nuclear and radiation technologies in areas such as cotton growing and cancer diagnosis and treatment. It was also working with the Agency on ensuring environmental radiation safety; radiation processing of materials; developing a nuclear and radiological EPR system and capabilities for the systematic control of public exposure to radon; and further strengthening the national radioactive waste management infrastructure.

154. Azerbaijan attached great importance to ensuring the security of nuclear and radioactive materials. It was taking active measures to strengthen export and border control to prevent smuggling and illicit trafficking, improve the security of facilities that used nuclear and radioactive materials and ensure the physical protection of such materials during transport. Following an agreement reached earlier in 2022, Azerbaijan had begun to replace technologies using radioactive sources, such as blood sterilization equipment, with alternative technologies, and was looking to expand that process to other organizations.

155. Azerbaijan commended and fully supported the Agency's efforts to ensure the safety and security of NPPs and related facilities in vulnerable regions of the world. It was closely following developments regarding Ukraine's nuclear facilities and welcomed the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya, which had demonstrated the Agency's commitment to its global nuclear safety mandate.

156. While the current focus was on ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities in conflict zones, it was important not to overlook the safety of such reactors in other regions of the world. Azerbaijan had been consistently drawing attention to safety risks posed by the Metsamor NPP in Armenia, which was located in a highly seismic area and continued to pose a significant danger to the South Caucasus region and beyond. It was alarming that, although the NPP was well past retirement age and had outdated technology, Armenia was considering extending its operation until 2036 and was even planning to build a new NPP.

157. Azerbaijan was confident that the Agency's efforts to study zoonotic diseases would help Member States build resilience and response capabilities. His country also welcomed NUTEC Plastics and looked forward to cooperating actively with the Agency to combat environmental pollution through modern scientific approaches and nuclear techniques.

158. Azerbaijan was using the most advanced and green technologies in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of its territories liberated from nearly three decades of Armenian occupation. As part of that endeavour, it was conducting environmental monitoring, including an assessment of the level of radioactive contamination, and was taking stringent measures to establish effective border control to ensure that the territories were not used for illegal purposes, such as the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials.

159. His country was satisfied with the Agency's activities to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy and increase global safety and security, and would continue to provide the necessary assistance and support.

160. Mr LULASHNYK (Canada) said that the General Conference came at a moment of profound global challenges, including the increasingly perilous impact of climate change and mounting nuclear proliferation risks. The Russian Federation had violated the UN Charter through its illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, its hostile actions against Ukrainian nuclear facilities and its continued control of Europe's largest NPP in Zaporizhzhya posed egregious nuclear safety, security and safeguards threats that struck at the heart of the Agency's mandate. Recalling the Board's September 2022 resolution³, Canada called on the Russian Federation to cease all actions against nuclear facilities in Ukraine and to allow the Ukrainian authorities to resume full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. The General Conference needed to address that critical issue.

161. Solutions to global problems required collective approaches achieved through effective multilateralism and international solidarity. Canada applauded and strongly supported the Agency's steadfast commitment and impartial, technical and fact-based work in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, implementing safeguards, and advancing nuclear safety and security. The Agency's professional work over the previous year had been nothing short of remarkable.

162. The peaceful use of nuclear energy showed clear promise as a means of addressing global challenges, including in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, meeting climate change targets and supporting the SDGs. His country had been working towards those objectives domestically through its CANDU technology and was pleased to recognize the 70th anniversary of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in 2022.

163. Advanced technologies such as SMRs had the potential to further enhance energy access and unlock opportunities for decarbonizing the global economy. Canada had issued its SMR action plan in 2020 and would be pleased to share its progress and experience with other Member States.

164. The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine had had a profound impact on energy security and affordability, including in the global nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear supplies markets. Canada stood ready to share its experience with others seeking to diversify energy supplies and work to reduce reliance on related goods from the Russian Federation.

165. It was regrettable that, in an effort to avoid accountability for its invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Federation had prevented the Tenth NPT Review Conference from reaching a consensus outcome. Nonetheless, the groundwork for cooperation remained. Canada and other States Parties had reaffirmed the validity and integrity of the NPT, and the draft outcome document represented an incremental step forwards in a difficult international environment. Importantly, the States Parties had reaffirmed the Agency's essential role in supporting the implementation of the Treaty.

166. Nuclear energy use came with important nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation obligations. The Agency and Member States must continue the full and robust implementation of nuclear safeguards, including the application of the additional protocol, which was essential to building confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

167. Continued efforts to address regional proliferation concerns, including in the DPRK, were central to preserving international peace and security. Canada would contribute an additional \$2.5 million to

³ GOV/2022/58

the Agency's DPRK Team for use over the next three years so that it could continue its critical role in providing Member States with assessments of the situation in the DPRK.

168. In the Middle East, Iran's nuclear programme remained a significant cause for concern. Canada was deeply troubled by Iran's efforts to further advance its nuclear programme over the preceding year and by its continued lack of cooperation with the Agency to address outstanding safeguards questions. His country remained a firm supporter of the JCPOA, which it hoped could be swiftly restored. Canada was a leading contributor to the Agency's verification and monitoring activities in Iran, having contributed \$17 million since 2014, and stood ready to provide another \$4 million to support those activities until 2025.

169. Canada welcomed the Agency's continued efforts to help Member States fulfil their nuclear safety and security responsibilities, without which the continued advancement and sharing of nuclear technology would not be possible. The Regulatory Infrastructure Development Project was an example of how the Agency was providing comprehensive nuclear safety and security assistance for beneficiary States throughout Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Canada also applauded the Agency's efforts to support Member States in implementing nuclear liability conventions and looked forward to further collaboration on the development of a global nuclear liability regime.

170. As the world faced major challenges on the nuclear front, States needed to prioritize and work together. Canada would remain committed to the highest levels of nuclear safety and security and would support the Agency's central role in the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

171. Ms KOIKA (Greece) said that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine constituted a blatant violation of fundamental concepts of international law, such as the inviolability of borders. The nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine was of particular concern, and Greece applauded the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya and the persistent work of Agency experts and inspectors at the NPP. The Agency's continued presence at the plant contributed to the much-needed transparency on site. Greece supported the Director General's proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhya NPP, the modalities of which were still to be agreed.

172. Regrettably, it was not only Zaporizhzhya NPP that was under threat. Recent serious incidents at other Ukrainian NPPs demonstrated clearly the potential significant dangers at the country's other nuclear facilities. Greece joined others in urging the Russian Federation to withdraw its forces from Ukraine and to fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. History had shown that a nuclear safety or security incident anywhere could have a significant transboundary impact and regional — or even global — implications. Each country must apply the highest standards of safety and security for the sake of mutual protection.

173. As a party to all main international nuclear safety conventions, Greece strongly believed that transparency was essential in instilling public confidence in the safety of nuclear energy. It fully supported the Agency's activities to improve nuclear safety worldwide and recognized the benefits for Member States of the Agency's review missions and advisory services. Member States were encouraged to publish mission results and the Agency should carefully consider Member State feedback to improve mission quality and responsiveness.

174. The Seventh Joint Convention Review Meeting had been an important opportunity for Contracting Parties to come together, discuss current global nuclear safety issues and participate in the peer review process. Greece thanked the presidency and the Secretariat for their efforts and looked forward to participating in the CNS Review Meeting in 2023.

175. The Agency's multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective safeguards system remained a core component of the NPT and a fundamental insurance for global security. It was regrettable that the Tenth NPT Review Conference had been unable to achieve consensus on a final outcome document, despite the excellent work of its President. The Agency and its Member States must continue the full and robust implementation of nuclear safeguards, including the application of the additional protocol, which was essential in building confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

176. Iran's systematic breaches of JCPOA limits were of deep concern. It was regrettable that the tireless diplomatic process launched in April 2021 by the EU High Representative to facilitate the USA's return to the JCPOA and full US and Iranian implementation of their respective commitments had not borne fruit. Greece urged Iran to reverse the dangerous trajectory of its nuclear programme and restore the access the Agency needed to provide assurances that Iran's nuclear programme remained peaceful.

177. Greece accorded paramount importance to the Agency's central and professional role in promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy for the development and prosperity of humankind while duly maintaining its safeguards work, even during the pandemic. Her country also welcomed the significant strides made in several flagship Agency initiatives over the previous year, including NUTEC Plastics, ZODIAC, ReNuAL 2 and Rays of Hope, all of which were critical to tackling some of the greatest challenges of the present time. In particular, NUTEC Plastics was a vital tool in the fight against pervasive global plastic pollution, the maritime aspect of which was of particular concern to countries like Greece.

178. Regarding nuclear knowledge management, Greek scientists and institutions were actively participating in scientific projects and in education and training through the TC programme. During the preceding year, and in close cooperation with the Agency, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission had organized numerous courses and workshops in Athens and had helped other Member States draft radiation safety regulations and establish national policies and strategies for education and training in radiation, transport and waste safety.

179. Her Government had provided several million euros of investment funding under the national recovery and resilience facility to strengthen the national infrastructure for radioactive waste management and radiological emergency response. It had also improved and updated national radiological and nuclear emergency response plans using the relevant Agency methodology.

180. Greece looked forward to the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century, to be held in October 2022 in Washington DC, which would provide the opportunity for nuclear and non-nuclear countries alike to enhance international dialogue on nuclear energy matters. The event would take place at a turning point in world politics, at a time when forces to maintain a rules-based order must prevail.

181. In closing, she reiterated Greece's tireless support for the Agency's central role in ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

182. Mr ASSAF (Lebanon) said that his country recognized the Agency's pivotal role in ensuring nuclear safety and security — two areas of growing importance given the rising geopolitical tensions in various areas of the world. He highlighted the Agency's efforts to support the sustainable development agenda by promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in fields such as clean energy, health, agriculture, industry and the environment.

183. In the light of its difficult economic circumstances, his country thanked the Agency for its support in the areas of technical cooperation and of nuclear security and safety, in addition to the donor countries that had offered support, first among them France. His country looked forward to updating its INSSP and to implementing its provisions in partnership with the Agency.

184. Welcoming its re-election to the presidency of ARASIA for the next five-year period, Lebanon reaffirmed its support for the main objectives of the agreement, namely to use nuclear technologies to combat counterfeiting and the illegal trade in art and antiquities, promote the early diagnosis and treatment of cancer, enhance food safety and security, and identify places affected by land and sea pollution and understand the sources of pollution.

185. The Agency's safeguards system was a fundamental pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the application of safeguards in the Middle East region was of strategic importance to that regime's success. It was therefore gravely worrying that, as stated in his most recent report on the subject, the Director General had been unable to make further progress in fulfilling his mandate in that regard, with Israel remaining as the only non-party to the NPT in the region, a fact which posed a constant and serious threat to the security and stability of the region and the goal of non-proliferation.

186. Lebanon had the honour of presiding over the third session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was set to take place in New York in November 2022. The conference would provide a valuable opportunity to achieve the aim of definitively ridding the Middle East of WMDs, which had been the core objective of the 1995 NPT Review Conference. Lebanon called on all parties that had not participated in the preceding two sessions of the conference to review their position and to adopt the same sort of positive, open-minded approach as the States that had already taken part.

187. Lastly, an important issue for Lebanon was achieving a gender balance in the Agency and its activities. Noting the Director General's efforts in that regard, Lebanon highlighted the importance of having a systematic gender equality policy in place.

188. Mr GRAFF (Luxembourg), applauding the diligence displayed by the Director General and his staff in the current difficult times, pledged his country's full support for, and cooperation in, the discharge of the Agency's important mandate.

189. Luxembourg did not deem nuclear energy a sustainable option for climate neutrality and was making increased efforts to realize the full potential of renewable energies, improve energy efficiency and achieve energy savings. The unresolved issue of radioactive waste management was a burden for future generations. Moreover, nuclear power entailed inherent risks to people and the environment, which were monumental in the event of armed conflict, as the current nuclear safety threats to NPPs in Ukraine demonstrated. It was for that reason that such facilities enjoyed special protection under Article 56 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.

190. The Russian aggression against Ukraine was a flagrant violation of international law and a severe test for the entire multilateral system. Luxembourg was committed to multilateralism as a crucial mechanism for global security. It was extremely troubled about the consequences of the military invasion, the risks and damage to nuclear facilities and the serious potential implications for human health and the environment. His country fully supported the Agency's work to help Ukraine ensure the nuclear safety and security of its NPPs and maintain safeguards on all nuclear material and activities. Ukrainian nuclear facilities must operate under the control of the Ukrainian regulatory authority and the Ukrainian operator must be permitted to carry out its functions without external interference.

191. The Russian military invasion of Ukraine disregarded collective efforts to strengthen the international nuclear safety and security infrastructure and ran counter to the 'seven pillars'. Eleven years after the Fukushima Daiichi accident and 36 years after the Chernobyl disaster, nuclear safety remained a challenge. The urgent need for several Agency support and assistance missions to Zaporizhzhya had shown that NPPs were particularly vulnerable and at great risk. Nuclear safety must

therefore be prioritized. Luxembourg supported a permanent Agency presence at Zaporizhzhya NPP and stressed the importance of establishing the proposed protection zone around the NPP, while ensuring full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

192. Luxembourg was firmly committed to strengthening nuclear security standards, in particular against terrorist threats and cyberattacks. The Agency must play its role as a global platform for strengthening nuclear security. Luxembourg was a long-time supporter of the TC programme and would be contributing to the TCF in 2023.

193. Luxembourg was deeply concerned that Iran, while negotiating the resumption of the JCPOA, had undertaken a series of actions inconsistent with the Plan, with serious and, in some cases, irreversible proliferation implications. To be quite clear: there would be no better agreement than the one tabled on 8 August 2022. Luxembourg urged Iran to implement all transparency measures requested by the Board in its resolution of 8 June 2022⁴ to enable the Agency to resume the verification and monitoring activities necessary to provide assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

194. Luxembourg also urged the DPRK to comply with all its international obligations and relevant Board and Security Council resolutions and to refrain from nuclear testing and ballistic missile launches. His country supported diplomatic efforts to promote a constructive dialogue with all concerned parties in order to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and pave the way for lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

195. The lack of cooperation and progress on outstanding issues regarding the Dair Alzour site in Syria was also troubling. Luxembourg continued to support the establishment of a zone free of WMDs and their means of delivery in the Middle East, as agreed in the 2010 NPT action plan.

196. As the global use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes increased, so too did the number of facilities and the quantity of nuclear material under Agency safeguards. The Agency's verification capacity was therefore indispensable for upholding the non-proliferation provisions of the NPT, and Luxembourg supported the Agency in fulfilling its responsibilities in that regard.

197. Luxembourg, which was a party to the CTBT, was also a party to the NPT and considered that instrument the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime and the only binding commitment for nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI. Although the Tenth NPT Review Conference had ended without the adoption of a final document, Luxembourg commended the States Parties and the presidency for their tireless efforts, and the Agency for its crucial work in supporting implementation.

198. In closing, he said that if the Agency was to continue to provide robust assurances against nuclear proliferation, it must be able to work impartially, independently and objectively.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

⁴ GOV/2022/34