

General Conference

GC(68)/OR.3

Issued: December 2024

General Distribution

Original: English

Sixty-eighth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Third Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Tuesday, 17 September 2024, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr HAM Sang Wook (Republic of Korea)

Later: Mr HUSSEN (Iraq)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹	Paragraphs
7 General debate and Annual Report for 2023 (<i>continued</i>)	1–198
Statements by the delegates of	
Sweden	1–16
Turkmenistan	17–19
Israel	20–29
Azerbaijan	30–33
Austria	34–41
Jordan	42–50
Zimbabwe	51–57
San Marino	58–64
Dominican Republic	65–68
Uganda	69–77

¹ GC(68)/21

Contents (continued)

	Paragraphs
Statements by the delegates of:	
Ethiopia	78–83
Cameroon	84–92
Senegal	93–100
Monaco	101–104
Italy	105–114
Democratic Republic of the Congo	115–119
Armenia	120–128
Malaysia	129–142
Germany	143–149
Bulgaria	150–160
Slovenia	161–170
Bosnia and Herzegovina	171–177
Plurinational State of Bolivia	178–182
Tajikistan	183–191
Liberia	192–198

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
AFCONE	African Commission on Nuclear Energy
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COMPASS	Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for SSACs and SRAs
COP28	28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
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
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EduTA	Education and Training Appraisal
Espoo Convention	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNRBA	Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

ICONS 2024	International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the Future
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIS	International Nuclear Information System
INSARR	Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactors
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITDB	Incident and Trafficking Database
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
Joint FAO/IAEA Centre	Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
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
NSTDC	Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
ORPAS	Occupational Radiation Protection Appraisal Service
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PGEC	Postgraduate Educational Course
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEANWFZ Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2023 (continued) (GC(68)/2)

1. Ms POURMOKHTARI (Sweden) said that her country was committed to attaining net zero emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 2045. For decades, Sweden had had a close to fossil fuel-free electricity system, due to a large share of nuclear power and hydroelectric power.

2. To meet increased demand for fossil fuel-free electricity, the Government had launched several initiatives to enable the rapid expansion of nuclear power in Sweden. Those initiatives included the establishment of a nuclear new build coordinator to advise on achieving rapid new build development; an inquiry to review the licensing process for new reactors; alterations in the Environmental Code to allow for the building of new reactors; and the strengthening of the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority with a view to the effective review and development of regulations and the licensing processes for existing and new nuclear power. The objective was to expand new nuclear power by at least 2500 MW of installed capacity by 2035, with a massive expansion beyond that.

3. The importance of nuclear power for reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions was recognized globally. At COP28, more than 20 countries had launched the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy, which recognized the key role of nuclear energy in achieving global net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and keeping the 1.5 degree goal within reach. There was a need to continue strengthening international collaboration to harness the potential of civil nuclear energy and triple nuclear energy globally while ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. The Agency played a vital role in all of those aspects.

4. The rapid expansion of nuclear power around the world was a key tool to avert the climate crisis. To that end, standardization was necessary, and Sweden welcomed the Director General's NHSI, with its possible implications for the development of SMRs.

5. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine continued to cause immense suffering. Although it was waging war against only one country, the Russian Federation was violating the rules of international law that underpinned the security of all. Those violations were further aggravated by the fact that the Russian Federation was a nuclear-weapon State, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a designated member of the Agency's Board of Governors.

6. Since the Russian Federation had launched its full-scale invasion, there had been countless breaches of the Agency's Seven Pillars. The only sustainable way to end the situation was for the Russian Federation to implement the resolutions of the General Conference and the Board, return control of Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful owner, and end its brutal war of aggression.

7. Since the beginning of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion, Sweden had contributed approximately €3.2 billion in various types of support to Ukraine. In May 2024, the Government had approved a financial framework amounting to €6.5 billion during the period 2024–2026. Funds allocated annually for nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine had more than doubled since February 2022. Moreover, Sweden had recently decided to contribute €47 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund, and it had made an extrabudgetary contribution earlier in 2024 of €1.7 million to support the Agency's safety and security assistance missions in Ukraine.

8. As co-lead of the working group for radiation and nuclear safety within the framework of the Ukrainian Peace Formula, Sweden welcomed the understandings on nuclear safety and security reached

at the Summit on Peace in Ukraine held in June 2024. All Member States were encouraged to build on them to promote a just peace in accordance with international law.

9. Sweden renewed its call on the DPRK to fulfil its international commitments and undertake the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, and immediately cease all related activities, in accordance with resolutions of the UN Security Council and the Agency's General Conference. Sweden remained committed to supporting a peaceful dialogue on the Korean Peninsula.

10. The escalating nuclear trajectory of Iran had led to a rapid deterioration of the situation and to questions regarding its intentions. Meanwhile, since early 2021, Iran had limited the Agency's verification capacity to the bare minimum under its NPT safeguards agreement, and it had failed to provide technically credible explanations regarding outstanding safeguards issues. Sweden reiterated its call on Iran to reverse its dangerous course, to re-engage diplomatically in a meaningful way, and to enable the Agency to verify the correctness and completeness of its declarations and draw soundly based safeguards conclusions. An indispensable step towards restoring confidence was the resumption of the additional protocol. Her country appreciated the Agency's professional, impartial and objective verification work in Iran, and had made a further extrabudgetary contribution of 2 million Swedish kronor to support it.

11. In the current, severely degraded security environment, it was more important than ever to protect the integrity of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, including the NPT, where the Agency's safeguards system played an indispensable role in upholding global security. Sweden stressed that CSAs with additional protocols constituted the contemporary standard for Agency safeguards pursuant to Article III of the NPT.

12. It was important that States adopt an approach that highlighted the interplay between nuclear safety and security, and safeguards, in order to better reflect not only their commonalities but also situations where safety and security considerations may conflict. Such an integrated approach to nuclear safety and security enabled an optimized balance of measures to attain the common objective of protecting people and the environment. Sweden recognized the essential role of the Agency and was pleased to continue contributing to its activities in that area.

13. A system for the final disposal of spent fuel from nuclear reactors was in place in Sweden. In recent years, her country had granted licenses for a deep geological repository for spent nuclear fuel, a fuel encapsulation plant and an expansion of the repository for low and intermediate level waste.

14. Sweden welcomed the active cooperation on cancer treatment between the Agency and the Elekta company, and the signature of an agreement during the Director General's visit in 2023. It was gratifying that a Swedish company could play a leading role in the Agency's important work to contribute to Member States' socioeconomic development.

15. Commending the progress towards gender parity within the Secretariat, Sweden encouraged the Agency to continue promoting gender mainstreaming in all its policies and organizational practices.

16. She closed by conveying her country's full support for the Agency's work to enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Sweden stood ready to help make it happen and was looking forward to even more active collaboration with the Agency in the coming years. Nuclear power was of particular importance, as it offered humanity a glimpse of hope in the dire situation of escalating climate change. The expansion of nuclear power across the globe must be stepped up in order to achieve the world's climate goals. As part of that transformation, the Agency had a fundamental role in keeping safety standards up to date and in assisting interested Member States

to build the competence and nuclear safety, security and safeguards infrastructure required in order to adapt and make use of the full potential of nuclear power for a fossil fuel-free future.

17. Ms BASHIMOVA (Turkmenistan) said that her country supported the prompt restoration of the sovereign equality of Member States of the Agency. All Member States should be freely admitted to one of the eight areas specified in the Statute and she looked forward to a positive decision being reached on the issue at the current session.

18. Thanks to proactive, joint efforts, it was now established practice for Turkmenistan and the Agency to hold consultations at various levels, which had played an important role in achieving mutual success and strengthening their partnership. For example, since the previous session of the General Conference, her country had acceded to two important conventions under the auspices of the Agency: the Assistance Convention and the Early Notification Convention. In addition, Turkmenistan had deposited its instrument of acceptance of the amendment to Article VI of the Statute. Furthermore, Turkmenistan's CPF was in the final stages of preparation and would soon be signed. The shared endeavours demonstrated the desire to strengthen cooperation between Turkmenistan and the Agency; specific goals for the future included capacity building and the improvement of regulatory and coordination work with the Agency.

19. Turkmenistan's priorities for the current session of the UN General Assembly included the promotion of non-proliferation and disarmament mechanisms, and all States and international organizations were encouraged to support and make a meaningful contribution to those priorities. In addition, her country had been a co-sponsor of the resolution on the International Year of Peace and Trust, 2025, adopted by the General Assembly during its seventy-eighth session; in that context, Turkmenistan called on the international community to intensify its work to strengthen peace and security.

20. Mr EDRI (Israel) said that the massacre of 7 October 2023 had been the most brutal attack that his country had faced since its establishment. Led by the inhumane terror organization Hamas and supported by Iran, the attack had taken a terrible toll on thousands of Israeli citizens, including women, children and babies, who had been murdered, raped or kidnapped by Hamas and taken to the Gaza Strip, where they were treated brutally. Dozens had been murdered in cold blood.

21. Israel was still far from understanding the long-term ramifications of the ongoing war against Hamas. On 14 April 2024, Iran had joined Hamas, firing 350 missiles from within its territory as a direct attack on Israel. However, the attack had failed owing to the assistance of Israel's close allies.

22. The safety and security of the country's nuclear facilities — openly targeted by Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, all the more so since 7 October 2023 — needed to be ensured. Israel continued to behave responsibly in that regard, taking all necessary precautions to ensure that the facilities were operated in accordance with the highest international safety and security standards in order to withstand the threats.

23. Iran continued to be the main source of regional instability and was a threat to peace and security worldwide. The full attention of the international community was required more than ever before. There was no doubt that Iran had developed a military nuclear programme aimed at producing several nuclear weapon devices. That programme was continuing to advance as Iran gained knowledge, technology and alarming amounts of fissile material.

24. The Agency had found concrete evidence that Iran had been conducting covert nuclear activities at undeclared sites for many years, including the use of undeclared nuclear material and equipment. Despite repeated resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors, Iran had continuously failed to provide technically credible explanations regarding the nature of those activities, and continued to deceive the Agency and the international community.

25. Moreover, Iran continued to develop, test and deploy long-range ballistic missiles. It also supported terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East, including the Houthi terrorist group, which posed a significant security threat to the freedom of navigation and to global trade routes. A nuclear-armed Iran, equipped with delivery systems, was not an option that Israel or the world could or should tolerate.

26. However, Iran was not the only case of non-compliance in the region. Syria, which had built at Dair Alzour an undeclared, clandestine nuclear reactor optimized for plutonium production, had been in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations for more than a decade. Syria had recently followed in the footsteps of its close ally, Iran, and was pretending to cooperate in good faith with the Agency, despite not disclosing the full facts or providing honest answers to the Agency's questions. The international community should stand behind the Agency with the aim of obtaining clear, full explanations from Syria.

27. Israel attached great importance to its cooperation with the Agency in areas including nuclear safety and security, technical cooperation, emergency preparedness, health and agriculture. Benefiting from the Agency's knowledge and expertise, Israel was firmly committed to the Agency's important mission and dedicated its best experts for that purpose.

28. Israel strongly believed in the principle of equal rights for all Member States, and deeply appreciated the efforts led by the Group of Friends of Arealess States to make progress on that issue following the adoption of the General Conference resolution in 2023². His country hoped that the initiative would finally rectify the long-standing discrimination against it and other 'arealess' States and allow them to join their natural geographical groups.

29. For many years, Israel had been singled out by the Arab Group's agenda item on so-called 'Israeli nuclear capabilities'. Israel strongly objected to the inclusion, year after year, of that politically driven agenda item — which went beyond the scope of the Agency's Statute and mandate — and the links drawn to other political issues that were completely unrelated to the deliberations of the General Conference. It was regrettable that the item had again been imposed, as it distracted from the important issues under consideration by the General Conference.

30. Mr AMIRASLANOV (Azerbaijan), noting that his country set great store by the Agency's activities in key areas such as nuclear energy and nuclear safety and security, and engaged in international dialogue on those issues, said that 2024 was particularly significant in terms of Azerbaijan's collaboration with the Agency, in view of its hosting of COP29. Nuclear energy was an essential resource for meeting the world's growing energy needs while supporting a cleaner, more sustainable future. The inclusion of nuclear energy in the Global Stocktake at COP28 as a way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions had been a historic milestone and a testament to the collective progress made in ensuring the safety and security of nuclear energy; it had also highlighted the instrumental role of the Agency. The Agency's focus on the environmental impacts of nuclear energy were commendable and merited full support.

31. Azerbaijan, as the host country of COP29, was committed to spearheading efforts to achieve tangible outcomes at that event, to be held in Baku later in 2024. Ensuring the inclusion of facilitated and affordable nuclear energy technologies in the resource deliberations of the COP process was essential. His country looked forward to the Agency's valuable input at the conference, including its dedicated pavilion to highlight the role of nuclear energy in addressing climate change.

32. Azerbaijan appreciated the Agency's TC programme, which had significantly benefited the country in fields including nuclear medicine, agriculture, environmental protection and nuclear safety.

² GC(67)/RES/15

Azerbaijan and the Agency had successfully concluded a new CPF, to be signed in the near future, in order to further strengthen their cooperation in key areas. Of particular importance was potential cooperation with the Agency on demining, as his country continued to rehabilitate devastated and landmine-contaminated territories liberated after three decades of Armenian occupation.

33. Lastly, Azerbaijan remained concerned about the risks associated with Metsamor NPP in Armenia — commissioned between 1976 and 1980 in a seismically active region, as it raised safety concerns. In the event of an earthquake, the wear and tear and outdated technologies at the plant could lead to a major regional disaster, causing significant harm to people and the environment. Azerbaijan again called on Armenia to comply with the recommendations of the Agency and to take the necessary measures in line with its international obligations.

34. Mr MARSCHIK (Austria) conveyed his thanks to the emergency services in the light of the recent flooding in Austria, and for the sympathy and solidarity extended to his country.

35. Noting that Austria fully aligned with the EU statement as circulated, he said that the Agency was currently on the front line of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression in Ukraine that violated the UN Charter, international law and the fundamental rules of coexistence. Austria called for that war to end. Similarly, the Russian Federation's irresponsible activities at Zaporizhzhya NPP and other nuclear installations in Ukraine must stop; it was irresponsible to place weapons in the vicinity of those installations, and his country condemned the use of the Zaporizhzhya NPP site and its surroundings to launch artillery and rockets against targets in Ukraine.

36. The international nuclear taboo was weakening — with past achievements being abandoned, agreements not being implemented and a new nuclear arms race taking place as arsenals were expanded and upgraded — and the nuclear landscape was extremely worrying. The pace of Iran's continued nuclear activity was alarming, and its new Government should cooperate fully with the Agency and provide the information necessary to resolve the open safeguards issues. Austria also called on the DPRK to reverse course, stop its provocations and return to diplomacy. Further escalation on the Korean Peninsula was in no one's interest.

37. Furthermore, failures with regard to the NPT had been occurring for 14 years. Progress on nuclear disarmament was not only a treaty obligation, but also an urgent necessity, given the accelerating slide towards a multifaceted arms race and the fact that an international security system based on the threat of mass destruction was simply too risky and was unsustainable. Nuclear deterrence was a high-risk wager, and its inherent risks were greater than ever: according to expert assessments, international affairs were increasingly being driven and triggered by irrational behaviour. History was replete with miscalculations and human and technical errors, and substantial and systematic disinformation campaigns were currently being waged.

38. It was a universally-held position that a failure of deterrence and the use of nuclear weapons would have a catastrophic global impact. Austria was, therefore, a strong supporter of the TPNW and called on all States to engage constructively.

39. Turning to his country's position on nuclear power, he said that while each country had the sovereign right to choose its own energy mix, Austria was of the view that nuclear power was neither safe nor sustainable. Far from being an 'ideological' position, that view was grounded in serious concerns for the future of all, in terms of the environmental and health effects of nuclear accidents and the unresolved question of the handling of nuclear waste.

40. Countries opting in favour of the use of nuclear power must uphold the highest standards, in particular with regard to safety and security. Furthermore, nuclear safety for existing installations must be continuously improved, on the basis of the principles established under the Vienna Declaration on

Nuclear Safety within the framework of the CNS. So-called 'advanced' technologies must also comply with nuclear safety standards.

41. He closed by commending the Agency's contribution to international peace, security and development and called for further progress in the spirit of Vienna.

42. Mr TOUKAN (Jordan) said that Israel's violent war on the Gaza Strip and its dangerous escalation in the occupied West Bank must be brought to an immediate end. In the face of Israel's stubborn refusal to uphold the resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly and the orders of the International Court of Justice calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and an end to the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, the international community must unite to uphold the rule of law, protect the Palestinian people and ensure their right to self-determination by implementing the two-State solution and establishing an independent Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as its capital.

43. Having repeatedly warned of the dangers of the crisis escalating or morphing into a regional war, Jordan reiterated its firm and principled position on the importance of universalizing the NPT and of placing all nuclear facilities in the Middle East under the safeguards regime. The Board of Governors and the international community at large must shoulder their responsibility and pressure Israel to sign the NPT. Moreover, all NPT States Parties must comply with the Treaty and related resolutions, in particular the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and with the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and all States of the region must engage in serious negotiations leading to the establishment of a WMD-free zone.

44. ICONS 2024 had further enhanced the Agency's role in strengthening global nuclear security. Upholding nuclear safety and security and applying nuclear safeguards was both a national obligation and an international responsibility; Jordan therefore remained committed to those goals in its national nuclear power programme.

45. A number of achievements had been made within the framework of that programme. In particular, the Jordan Research and Training Reactor had become pivotal in nuclear technology localization in the country, having contributed significantly to the development of various applications, including through the production of radioisotopes for medical and industrial use. The reactor produced various isotopes for use in the treatment of cancer, including iodine-131, which was produced to internationally approved specifications and supplied to all nuclear medical centres in the country, and holmium-166, which Jordan distributed internationally. R&D was under way for the production of technetium-99m, terbium-161 and yttrium-90. Furthermore, the reactor's ISO 9001 certification had been expanded to cover the production of iodine-131, holmium-166 and iridium-192, of which the latter was used in non-destructive testing.

46. Praising the growing global interest in nuclear power as a way of reducing carbon emissions and the commitment made by several States at COP28 to triple nuclear power production by 2050, Jordan noted that it was in the process of conducting a technical and economic evaluation of several SMR designs. Jordan was also carrying out preliminary economic feasibility studies and evaluating detailed engineering designs for a uranium ore plant, as part of its project to extract uranium from the ore located in the central region of the country, estimated to correspond to some 41 000 tonnes of yellowcake.

47. SESAME continued to operate five beamlines: the X-ray spectroscopy beamline, the infrared spectromicroscopy beamline, the materials science beamline, the soft X-ray beamline and the tomography beamline.

48. Jordan was deeply grateful to the Agency for the technical support that it had provided to the Jordanian health sector, in particular the provision of positron emission tomography-computed tomography equipment to Al-Bashir Hospital to support cancer treatment.

49. As part of its efforts to become a regional centre for specialized scientific capacity building, Jordan had, for the third year in a row, hosted the PGEC in Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources, delivered in Arabic. On the margins of the General Conference, Jordan would conclude Practical Arrangements with the Agency on the delivery of the course.

50. In closing, he praised the vital role played by the Agency in achieving global prosperity through the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

51. Mr MOYO (Zimbabwe), commending the Director General and the Secretariat on their sterling commitment to the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, said that his country welcomed the Agency's continued drive to share nuclear technology and knowledge with developing countries in order to improve their capabilities and enable them to benefit more from the peaceful uses of such technology and its applications. Zimbabwe valued the contributions of nuclear science and technology to development and the attainment of the SDGs. It sought to step up their application as it pursued its national Vision 2030, a programme intended to boost productivity in the areas of agriculture, industry and minerals as well as access to clean and sustainable energy, in keeping with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

52. The 'Atoms4Food' theme of the Scientific Forum was timely and matched Zimbabwe's priorities during the current drought, induced by El Niño. Nuclear techniques represented a feasible strategy towards enhancing productivity and addressing the country's food security challenges. The steady increase in nuclear science and technologies in the country was in keeping with the Agency's mission, and Zimbabwe intended to venture into more beneficial and advanced nuclear applications, including power generation. Unpredictable climatic conditions had hampered previously reliable hydroelectric power generation, and an urgent response was required. Zimbabwe was keenly following developments in new technologies, in particular small modular reactors, to guide its future policies and decisions.

53. His country remained committed to international cooperation and global nuclear safety and security. In 2023, Zimbabwe had ratified several international instruments of the Agency, and was working to implement them; it also intended to host an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission in November 2024.

54. Zimbabwe was grateful for the continued Agency support offered through the TCF and Nuclear Security Fund and was committed to meeting its obligations with respect to the TCF, National Participation Costs and the Regular Budget, which all made a critical contribution to technical cooperation and the Agency's smooth functioning. His country lauded the Director General and his staff for their tireless efforts in mobilizing extrabudgetary resources and securing critical partnerships for the TC programme. That programme had allowed Zimbabwe to succeed in key areas such as mutation breeding, a national soil information system and small-scale drip irrigation technology.

55. Zimbabwe remained committed to fighting the rising cancer burden and welcomed the recent return of radiotherapy services to public hospitals. It also applauded the Secretariat's efforts to expand the implementation of the Rays of Hope initiative, which would further strengthen capacities to respond effectively and sustainably to the cancer emergency.

56. In August 2024, Zimbabwe had hosted the Southern African Development Community Heads of State and Government Summit in Harare, and was grateful for the Agency's assistance in loaning equipment and training nuclear security front-line officers. The experience had inspired the authorities to mobilize resources to advance national detection and response capabilities in the future.

57. He closed by conveying the gratitude of Zimbabwe for the Agency's TC support and urged the Agency to continue deploying its expertise and knowledge, together with partners, to address the world's complex challenges.

58. Mr BECCARI (San Marino) said that his country, which had no army or WMDs, remained devoted to peace and dialogue, and promoted and protected human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, being a party to the main international treaties in those areas.

59. Given that the Agency had been founded in response to growing international concerns about nuclear weapons, amidst the tensions of the Cold War, it was unfortunate that the world had reached a somewhat similar historical juncture, exacerbated by other challenges such as climate change and technological developments. In that regard, the role of the Agency remained absolutely crucial. His country hoped that international peace and security could soon be restored.

60. San Marino applauded the Director General and the staff of the Secretariat for all the work done in the preceding year to increase nuclear safety and security and to galvanize the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in human and animal health, food and agriculture, climate change, water quality and the fight against pollution through the various flagship initiatives.

61. His country complimented the work done in the Seibersdorf laboratories, where Agency scientists engaged in global cooperation in order to improve preparedness for future challenges. It praised the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme, which offered women in the nuclear sector new opportunities for career advancement.

62. San Marino appreciated the Agency's provision of support at nuclear facilities, guaranteeing proper operation in areas affected by conflicts, in particular at NPPs in Ukraine.

63. San Marino remained concerned that some countries continued to avoid sharing information and to prevent verifications, thereby contravening commitments to the Agency and to the rest of the world.

64. Lastly, his country hoped for the restoration of sovereign equality in the Agency and supported the working group established in order to allocate the 'arealess' Member States. The status quo could not be maintained and San Marino appealed to all to demonstrate inclusion and fairness with regard to their fellow Member States.

65. Mr SANTOS ECHAVARRÍA (Dominican Republic) said that the Director General's impartiality and commitment had been key to the advancement of nuclear safety and the peaceful development of nuclear science.

66. The Dominican Republic had strengthened its cooperation with the Agency over the preceding four years. An oncology hospital had been built in one of the most vulnerable regions in the country through Rays of Hope — in which his country was proud to participate — and, again with the Agency's invaluable support, a secondary standards dosimetry laboratory was being built.

67. The Dominican Republic welcomed the progress made in food security by the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre and reiterated its commitment to Atoms4Food. Furthermore, it supported the promotion of gender equity through the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme and welcomed the Agency's work to develop small modular reactors, which were essential for energy sustainability.

68. His country hoped that the current session of the General Conference would be a space for reflection, constructive dialogue and the renewal of Member States' commitment to the peaceful and safe development of nuclear technologies. In an increasingly interconnected world replete with challenges, the meeting offered an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation, promote scientific innovation and ensure that the benefits of nuclear applications were felt in every country, thus contributing to the common good and the achievement of the SDGs.

69. Mr OKAASAI (Uganda) said that the Director General's leadership in accelerating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and applications merited appreciation. Notable initiatives under the Director General's leadership included Rays of Hope, aimed at improving access to radiotherapy for cancer management in low and middle income countries, and ZODIAC, addressing zoonotic diseases such as mpox, which was ravaging Uganda's neighbourhood. Uganda was also interested in participating in the Agency's Atoms4Food initiative, aimed at achieving a world free of hunger by 2030 and putting forward practicable solutions geared to enhancing and scaling up agricultural productivity, food safety and human nutrition.

70. Uganda welcomed the Agency's activities and continued support in various sectors through the TC programme and AFRA. In 2024, his country had signed its fifth CPF with a focus on advancing nuclear science and technology in priority areas such as nuclear and radiation safety, food and agriculture, human health, water and the environment, and the introduction of nuclear power and uranium production.

71. Uganda prioritized the peaceful use of nuclear energy and was committed to strengthening its national nuclear regulator — the Atomic Energy Council — to ensure protection of people and the environment, while facilitating the responsible development of nuclear energy and applications. The Agency's unwavering support to the Atomic Energy Council was welcome.

72. Turning to cancer management, he noted that the Uganda Cancer Institute had been recognized as an oncological centre of excellence within the East African Community. Uganda had made significant strides in the field of radiotherapy and had launched a specialized training programme so as to contribute to capacity building for radiotherapy in the East African region. Uganda hoped that its facilities could become a Rays of Hope Anchor Centre.

73. Net zero carbon emissions could not be achieved without increasing the share of nuclear power in the electricity generation mix. Uganda appreciated all efforts and technological advancements aimed at enhancing the contribution of nuclear power to climate change mitigation, energy security and sustainable development, in line with the commitments made at COP28. The same level of commitment to advancing nuclear energy was expected to be made at COP29.

74. Nuclear power was a major component in his country's energy transition plan. Uganda had embarked on Phase 2 of the Agency's Milestones approach, which focused on building specialized nuclear institutions and undertaking preparatory work for the construction of a first NPP, which would commence in the near future. Key developments towards that goal included establishing a nuclear framework, identifying sites for nuclear infrastructure and establishing the National Centre for Nuclear Science and Technology at Soroti University to support human resources development. The Centre would host a medium-power multipurpose research reactor for education, training, and basic and applied research in the nuclear field.

75. Uganda had hosted an Integrated Uranium Production Cycle Review mission in May 2024. The outcome of the mission dovetailed with his country's aspiration to develop uranium resources, in accordance with the Milestones approach for the development of national infrastructure for uranium production.

76. With the prospect of developing nuclear power and uranium resources and the significant rise in nuclear applications, Uganda was committed to strengthening the national infrastructure for nuclear safety, security and safeguards. Accordingly, it was in the advanced stages of amending the Atomic Energy Act 2008 in order to put in place a comprehensive law on nuclear science, with the Agency's welcome assistance.

77. He closed by commending the Agency on its role in enhancing nuclear safety, security and safeguards worldwide, thereby ensuring the well-being of humankind and preventing nuclear terrorism and proliferation.

78. Mr BELETE (Ethiopia) expressed appreciation to the Director General for his progressive promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear science and applications and for his leadership in such initiatives as Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics and the IAEA Marie-Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme, which had benefited Ethiopia in terms of infrastructure and human resources development. His country was also enthusiastic about the new Atoms4Food initiative, intended to help countries boost food security and tackle hunger. As a founding member of the Agency, Ethiopia pledged to support that initiative to use nuclear and other advanced technologies in order to find solutions tailored to country-specific needs and circumstances.

79. With the application of nuclear science and technology increasing significantly in many sectors, Ethiopia was committed to harnessing them for development, including by exploring the potential of nuclear power and establishing a centre for nuclear science and technology to sustainably manage the sector. Substantive measures were under way in that regard, and Agency support had played a key role in enhancing Ethiopia's capacities in the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology. His country aimed to strengthen technical cooperation with the Agency so as to achieve the aspirations of the national nuclear programme.

80. Ethiopia had signed its fifth CPF with the Agency, for the period 2024–2028, ensuring continued technical cooperation in vital sectors such as agriculture, health, manufacturing, energy and human capital development.

81. Ethiopia had requested an imPACT Review, which had been conducted from September 2023 to April 2024; the resulting report was proving instrumental in activities related to the national cancer control plan. Ethiopia planned to establish more radiotherapy centres, in collaboration with the Agency, and it sought the Agency's continued support in fully equipping cancer treatment centres and opening more so as to tackle the cancer burden.

82. With a view to promoting technical cooperation and creating a vital platform for exchanging ideas and best practices, fostering new collaboration and building partnerships among the Agency, AFRA, Member States and States Parties, Ethiopia had hosted various AFRA meetings in 2023 and 2024 and would be chairing AFRA for one year as of September 2024. His country had also demonstrated its commitment to the continued success of the TC programme by providing the necessary legal and regulatory framework, infrastructure and logistics. The Ethiopian Technology Authority had fully implemented the regulatory control system — including notification, authorization, inspection and enforcement — to systematically control radiation sources and practices.

83. In closing, he expressed gratitude for the Agency's long-standing cooperation with his country and underlined Ethiopia's commitment to further collaboration.

84. Ms TCHUINTE (Cameroon) said that her country was pleased that the Director General and his team had continued to promote nuclear safety and security amid a global context marked by numerous tensions and armed conflicts by helping to prevent nuclear accidents, in particular in conflict zones. The Agency played a unique role and Cameroon encouraged it to continue promoting all countries' access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

85. The Agency continued to employ nuclear techniques to respond to Member States' needs in the face of global challenges. Cameroon welcomed the priority accorded by the TC programme to sustainable and resilient food production and farming and related livelihoods through climate-smart

agriculture, including by addressing animal and zoonotic diseases, agricultural pests, food security risks, climate change, biological threats and nuclear and radiological emergencies.

86. With global energy demands growing, Cameroon encouraged the Agency to continue helping countries interested in nuclear power to plan their energy policy, understand the requirements for making decisions about nuclear power, and develop the necessary infrastructure in accordance with the Milestones approach.

87. In terms of human resources development, Cameroon welcomed the Agency's continued support for the training of medical physicists, in particular its collaboration with the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics to offer a master's degree in advanced medical physics. Her country also appreciated the PGEC in Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources and the regional Agency training course for African educators organized at the Argonne National Laboratory in the USA, which focused on introducing nuclear science in secondary schools using innovative approaches.

88. The 21st meeting of the FNRBA Steering Committee had been held in June 2024, and the nuclear community had continued to make significant progress in improving safety worldwide, reflecting the Agency's exceptional involvement in strengthening Member States' legislative and regulatory frameworks. Her country was grateful for the support received while drafting its 2019 framework law on radiological and nuclear safety, nuclear security, civil liability and the application of safeguards. Cameroon also thanked the Agency for its expert review of the draft of a decree implementing certain provisions of the 2019 law. The Agency was encouraged to continue assisting Member States in developing legal instruments as part of its project to strengthen nuclear regulations.

89. Cameroon agreed with the Agency and wider international community that nuclear security was a global concern. Her country was closely following the Agency's work to promote the universalization of the CPPNM and A/CPPNM in order to facilitate discussions and experience-sharing on their application.

90. In July 2023, Cameroon had hosted a subregional tabletop exercise on the secure transport of radioactive materials that had brought together representatives from Central Africa. An INSSP review mission and a nuclear security awareness-raising mission had been conducted in March 2024 in Yaoundé, and in September 2024 her country had received a team of experts to assess its nuclear security measures for the transport of radioactive materials. The outcomes of that assessment would serve as a reference for revising a draft decree currently under preparation.

91. To increase access to nuclear science and technology, Cameroon supported close collaboration between the Agency and regional bodies such as AFRA — whose innovative activities contributed to training a new generation of African scientists specialized in nuclear applications for development — the FNRBA and AFCONE.

92. Cameroon welcomed the Agency's efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation in the field, as illustrated by the COMPASS initiative, along with the first COMPASS mission to the country organized in July 2024. Cameroon had shown its commitment to nuclear verification by supporting the first Agency safeguards inspection mission to the country in August 2024, which had helped to strengthen the capacities of its National Radiation Protection Agency, responsible for implementation of the CSA and additional protocol.

93. Mr DIOUF (Senegal) said that, with the support of the Agency and other partners, such as the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the US Office of Radiological Security, his country's Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority had established effective and efficient control of all activities and practices involving radioactive materials and associated facilities. However, as for other regulatory authorities, Senegal's was working in an extremely uncertain context that required resilience and

flexibility in the face of needs related to energy security and the energy transition, and the development of new technologies, in particular in medicine. The Agency and other partners should therefore continue to support regulatory authorities in strengthening their resources and skills so that nuclear safety and security requirements were prioritized in all projects and programmes.

94. Senegal thanked the Director General for the opportunity to champion the Rays of Hope initiative. The fight against cancer required substantial financial resources to purchase cutting-edge technology, and well-trained human resources throughout the cancer therapy chain. Rays of Hope had helped by providing modern equipment and by training health professionals in best practices in radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and medical imaging. Senegal thanked its partners — including Japan, the USA and the company Roche — for funding training abroad for nearly 40 Senegalese fellows and for helping Senegal to acquire equipment to fight that silent killer.

95. Senegal appreciated the support of imPACT, WHO and the Agency's Division for Africa in developing its new national cancer control strategic plan for 2023–2027. Implementation was expected to be greatly facilitated by the completion of the national oncology centre in Diamniadio, scheduled for 2025, and by the provision of modern cancer treatment facilities for public hospitals. Thanks to the Director General's personal commitment, Senegal would soon have its first cyclotron — a milestone in the development of its nuclear medicine capabilities. Given the lack of data on differences in the clinical profile of tumours, responses to radiotherapy and toxicity grading in West and Central Africa compared with other parts of the world, Senegal hoped to establish a specialized laboratory to increase understanding of radiation-induced lesions and improve treatment for thousands of cancer patients in the region; support for that project through Rays of Hope would be welcome.

96. With Agency support, Senegal would soon complete its nuclear research reactor project, which, in its first phase, would be used for training and education to develop qualified human resources. His country also intended to develop a nuclear power programme in the near future to boost its energy production and transition to resilient and low-carbon power.

97. Senegal welcomed the results achieved in tsetse fly control thanks to the support of the Agency, the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre and the USA, which had enabled it to make improvements concerning dairy cattle. Like other developing countries, Senegal suffered major losses of fruit and vegetable produce every year owing to a lack of infrastructure. To remedy that situation and support its food sovereignty, his country hoped to acquire one or more irradiators with Agency support.

98. Senegal congratulated the Director General on the launch of Atoms4Food and pledged the support of its research institutes and universities. The private sector should also be involved in the adoption of novel agricultural technologies.

99. Human capacity building — a vital complement to technology transfer — should remain a top Agency priority. Senegal appreciated the support provided through AFRA to develop a national human resources development strategy for master's and doctoral programmes.

100. In order to improve coordination, raise the profile of the TC programme and raise awareness at all levels, Senegal was considering establishing a nuclear energy agency or commission, with the Agency's support, and planned to establish a national INIS centre at the Cité du Savoir hub in Diamniadio.

101. Ms ROSABRUNETTO (Monaco) said that her country — the host of the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratories for over 60 years — attached particular importance to the Agency's activities related to protection of the marine environment. At its March 2024 series of meetings, the Board of Governors had approved an amendment to the Seat Agreement between the Agency and Monaco to reflect changes in the activities carried out at the laboratories since 1961. The amendment

was scheduled to be signed on the sidelines of the upcoming Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme in November 2024, and her country welcomed its renewed cooperation with the Agency.

102. The Agency's activities to combat marine plastic pollution were in line with the Prince of Monaco's personal commitment to preserving the world's oceans. The Beyond Plastic Med initiative, launched by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, was working towards the same end in the Mediterranean Sea. The Agency's efforts to promote NUTEC Plastics were thus welcome, and data collected through that initiative would make a valuable contribution to implementation of a future plastics pollution treaty, the adoption of which Monaco strongly supported.

103. Human health was another pillar of Monaco's cooperation with the Agency, and her country had long supported the Agency's work in the fight against cancer. Worldwide cancer cases were expected to rise by 2030, with low and middle income countries hardest hit, and the global approach embodied by Rays of Hope was one of the best ways to meet SDG target 3.4. As the initiative proceeded to roll out across all continents, with support from both organizations and the private sector, Monaco would continue to support Rays of Hope and was in the process of renewing its multi-year agreement to that end.

104. She closed by noting that the Agency played a central role in establishing the regulatory framework and safety and security procedures for nuclear facilities. Monaco welcomed the Agency's efforts to uphold nuclear safety, security and safeguards, in particular the various expert missions to Ukraine since September 2022, some of which had been led by the Director General in person. Her country reiterated the need to support and comply with the Seven Pillars and Five Principles, as the security of the entire world was at stake.

105. Mr SILLI (Italy) said that his country aligned itself with the official EU statement available online and that Italy greatly appreciated the Agency's crucial role in increasingly difficult circumstances.

106. The illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked Russian war of aggression against Ukraine not only continued to cause huge civilian casualties but also threatened a nuclear accident. The overall nuclear safety and security situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP remained precarious and fragile and the Seven Pillars and the Five Principles should be observed, in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Russian Federation must withdraw its military and enable the Ukrainian authorities — the only legitimate authorities — to gain control of the site.

107. Italy commended the Agency's ongoing efforts at all Ukrainian nuclear sites and the Director General's unwavering commitment to addressing those challenges. His country had promptly offered financial support to the Agency for the extraordinary needs arising from those crucial undertakings and would continue to do so.

108. Italy had long been a staunch supporter of the JCPOA, the restoration of which should remain a top priority for the international community. It therefore supported and commended the Agency's continued monitoring and verification activities. However, Iran's lack of cooperation with the Agency and its continued enrichment of uranium remained a matter of deep concern for the Agency and the whole international community. Italy again urged Iran to implement its obligations under the JCPOA without delay and to fully cooperate with the Agency so as to allow it to freely carry out its verification and monitoring activities.

109. The DPRK's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programmes were in blatant violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. That country must fully comply with its international obligations and refrain from conducting further nuclear tests, and such reckless actions would not gain the DPRK the status of a nuclear-weapon State or any special status whatsoever. Italy called on the

DPRK to accept offers of dialogue from all interested parties to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Commending the Agency on its readiness to return to the country in order to perform its essential verification role as soon as conditions allowed, Italy expressed its increasing concern at the enhanced military cooperation and unlawful arms transfers between the DPRK and the Russian Federation.

110. The Agency's system of safeguards remained crucial for the non-proliferation architecture and for international security. A CSA together with an additional protocol represented the current verification standard, and their universalization should be pursued without delay.

111. Nuclear safety and security were among the priorities of the Italian presidency of the G7, and his country and its partners were committed to promoting the full implementation, by all States, of the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards, in line with Agency standards and guidance. Italy — which was a party to all the main international nuclear safety conventions — actively supported the Agency in that regard and called on all States that possessed, or intended to develop, a nuclear power programme to adhere to international instruments and cooperate with the Agency. His country remained fully committed to improving the international nuclear security environment, sustaining the central role of the Agency and encouraging all Member States to fulfil their respective responsibilities.

112. Italy highly valued the technical assistance and cooperation programmes implemented by the Agency and would contribute more than €3 million to the TCF in 2025. He reiterated his country's support for the Agency's flagship initiatives as key contributions to advancing the SDGs. Internationally coordinated actions were important so as to build more resilient, sustainable and inclusive agricultural and food systems, with the Agency playing a key role in that respect.

113. Italy reiterated the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in the STEM sector and supported all policies and instruments to reach that goal. The launch of the new round of the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, and of the Lise Meitner Programme, was welcome.

114. In line with its work to advance research on fusion and innovative fission systems, Italy would co-host, together with the Agency, the First Ministerial Meeting of the World Fusion Energy Group in November 2024 in Rome, affording his country the opportunity to support research and innovation in the energy sector. In addition, several major Italian institutions and companies were at the forefront of nuclear fusion research. The Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development led the Italian segment of the EUROfusion consortium, coordinating activities carried out by 20 parties, including universities, research institutes and industries.

115. Mr KABANDA KURHENGA (Democratic Republic of the Congo), conveying the vision of his country's president that nuclear should be a means of achieving peace for people and the environment, said that his country had recently been selected to host a regional workshop on the application of IAEA safety standards concerning operational radiation protection and radioactive waste management for research reactors, confirming the Agency's firm commitment to nuclear safety and security in African countries in particular.

116. Significant progress had been made towards the construction of a multidisciplinary diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy centre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the completion of topographic and environmental impact studies, the establishment of an interministerial project implementation committee and the activation of a financing mechanism.

117. Having signed a CPF for 2023–2028, his country thanked the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation and his Department for their diligence, and for the strategy put in place to ensure that the framework was duly implemented.

118. In 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had joined the revised AFRA agreement, demonstrating its willingness and determination to promote the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology at the regional level. Thanks were due to the Agency for its continued support in the form of equipment and human capacity building through TC projects and AFRA. Reiterating its request for Agency support and expertise in restarting the TRICO II research reactor, his country welcomed the participation of Congolese experts in training courses aimed at strengthening their technical and operating capacities.

119. In conclusion, he said that the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained determined to realize a world free of nuclear weapons and to pool knowledge and resources to promote nuclear energy for the benefit of all humankind.

120. Mr VARDANYAN (Armenia) said that his country recognized the Agency's central role in promoting a strong and sustainable global nuclear safety and security framework, as well as in assisting Member States in building sustainable national competences and capabilities. Armenia, as a member of the Board of Governors, would help the Director General and the Secretariat to uphold the Agency's technical and independent mandate.

121. Reaffirming Armenia's unwavering commitment to the NPT and the Agency's safeguards agreements and additional protocols, he noted that the Agency had continuously drawn the broader conclusion for his country. Armenia also attached great importance to ensuring a robust nuclear security regime and effective border control and, with the Agency's support, had developed its INSSP, reconstructed the perimeter of the Armenian NPP and enhanced its nuclear security culture; moreover, it was a supporter of the NSTDC. Its active and high-level participation in ICONS 2024 had provided another demonstration of its commitment. His country fully implemented its international obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and also had a stellar record with regard to the ITDB, dating back many years.

122. Over the preceding 30 years, Armenia's partnership with the Agency had grown. It supported the Agency's core activities, including through its active participation in the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee, the NHSI, the International Generic Ageing Lessons Learned project and the Technical and Scientific Support Organization Forum, and had benefited from the Agency's valuable expertise and technical assistance in the field of nuclear power and non-power applications.

123. Armenia appreciated the Director General's initiatives aimed at utilizing nuclear science and applications in achieving sustainable development goals, in particular Rays of Hope, which provided sterling support to national programmes for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. The Agency's continued support for Armenia's National Centre of Oncology merited particular gratitude.

124. Nuclear power was at the heart of his country's cooperation with the Agency, as a crucial component in ensuring its energy security and achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. The Armenian NPP had been serving the economic development of Armenia for four decades, during which time no nuclear or radiation safety incidents had been recorded. His country upheld the Agency's nuclear safety and security standards in its operation of the NPP and was committed to their continuous improvement. Under its CNS obligations, and taking into account the Vienna Declaration, Armenia systematically performed safety assessments, undertook safety improvements at the plant and updated its national regulations in accordance with the Agency's safety standards and international good practices; it also regularly hosted Agency peer review and advisory services and follow-up missions, addressing the Agency's findings and recommendations. For example, Armenia had hosted a TC Expert Mission on Seismic Safety Peer Review in July 2023.

125. His country had developed a programme to extend the operational lifetime of Unit 2 at the Armenian NPP until 2036; the project had been approved and work had already started. Armenia was

committed to implementing the required measures in a timely manner, and was grateful for the Agency's assistance, guidance and knowledge — in particular in the area of ageing management and safe long-term operation — and for cooperation with partner countries.

126. The extension would lay a solid foundation for the smooth transition to a new unit at the end of the Armenian NPP's extended operating lifetime, which was the ultimate objective. Armenia continued to study the feasibility and potential of constructing new nuclear power units and had established a nuclear energy programme implementing organization in accordance with the Agency's guidelines. The organization would oversee the entire process, from developing the feasibility study to construction of the unit, and would subsequently operate the new plant.

127. Unlocking the full potential of nuclear power would pave the way to a sustainable future for generations to come. Armenia had demonstrated its staunch support for various initiatives of the Agency and its Member States aimed at promoting nuclear energy, including through high-level participation in the Agency's COP28 events and the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels. The General Conference provided a unique opportunity for all Member States to create a more enabling environment and strengthen international cooperation for 'Atoms for Peace', free of politically motivated campaigns and geopolitical considerations.

128. He closed by expressing regret that Azerbaijan had used that forum to disseminate baseless allegations against his country. The only "outdated" aspect of the Armenian NPP was the false narrative that Azerbaijan had repeated during the meeting. Armenia considered those claims to be a direct attack on the professionalism and authority of the Agency, given its assessment of the safe and secure operation of the Armenian NPP, and to have the ulterior motive of hampering his country's peaceful nuclear programme and its contribution to Armenia's economic development.

Mr Hussen (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

129. Mr DARMAWAN (Malaysia) said that his country appreciated the Agency's promotion of transparency, efficiency and accountability in fulfilling its mandated role and reiterated its support for the effective functioning of the Agency on the basis of financial contributions paid on time and in full.

130. Reaffirming that the NPT was the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and that the TPNW was a vital instrument for advancing nuclear disarmament, Malaysia recognized the Agency's sole authority in verifying NPT safeguards, expressing full confidence in its impartiality and professionalism.

131. Malaysia reiterated its support for the restoration and full implementation of the JCPOA and called on the relevant parties to engage in sustained dialogue and diplomacy to that end.

132. Citing its grave concern at the situation on the Korean Peninsula, Malaysia condemned the significant escalation of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programme and urged the parties concerned to resume dialogue to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

133. Malaysia emphasized the importance of negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States within NWFZs, including the Southeast Asia NWFZ. It was prepared to engage with all nuclear-weapon States to resolve outstanding issues in line with the SEANWFZ Treaty and reaffirmed its support for efforts to establish a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East.

134. His country appreciated the Agency's support in building the capacities necessary to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of nuclear installations. Reflecting its commitment to enhancing reactor safety, Malaysia would receive an INSARR mission in 2025 and was committed to hosting the

PGEC in Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources by extending its Practical Arrangements with the Agency for another term.

135. Malaysia remained deeply concerned about the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP and reiterated the need to ensure the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear sites to prevent any disaster in the region.

136. Malaysia continued to enhance capabilities in nuclear security through its national nuclear security support centre, including by sharing best practices in nuclear security detection with Djibouti and Zimbabwe. It encouraged other Member States to use the facility in order to explore collaborative opportunities and strengthen cooperation.

137. As chair of ASEAN in 2025, Malaysia was committed to revitalizing ASEAN-led initiatives and achieving milestones to advance regional and global cooperation. It planned to use equipment supplied by the Agency through a partnership agreement on radiation detection equipment for security screening at major public events during its chairing of ASEAN. Moreover, as chair of ASEANTOM in 2025, his country planned a multilateral maritime exercise with ASEAN countries to enhance nuclear security detection and regional coordination, with Agency support through the INSSP.

138. Malaysia commended the Agency for ICONS 2024, which had significantly advanced the collective understanding of and response to nuclear security challenges.

139. A strong supporter of the TC programme, his country was actively working with the Agency to align its new CPF with its national policies and priorities, in particular the National Nuclear Technology Policy. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme set for November 2024 presented a key opportunity to discuss progress and strengthen the commitment to nuclear science and technical cooperation.

140. Recognizing the vital role of education and knowledge sharing, and reflecting its commitment to nurturing young talent, Malaysia was honoured to chair the International Nuclear Science and Technology Academy and to host the International Nuclear Science Olympiad in 2025. It also looked forward to hosting an EduTA mission to enhance its national education and training frameworks.

141. Malaysia remained committed to supporting Agency initiatives, in particular NUTEC Plastics, ZODIAC and Rays of Hope, and planned to contribute to the Atoms4Food initiative by leveraging expertise and sharing the achievements of its IAEA Collaborating Centre at the 2024 Scientific Forum.

142. Lastly, he conveyed Malaysia's appreciation for the Agency's vital support and transparency in facilitating Member States' development goals through nuclear technology, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Agency, other Member States and partners for sustainable socioeconomic progress.

143. Mr TIDOW (Germany), noting that his country associated itself with the EU statement as published online, said that the courage and professionalism of Agency staff who ensured nuclear safety and security in Ukraine amid the Russian Federation's war of aggression merited particular gratitude. Germany urged the Russian Federation to end its unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war immediately and restore full control of Zaporizhzhya NPP to its rightful and sovereign owner — Ukraine. His country strongly condemned any acts compromising the safety and security of nuclear facilities, including recent attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine. The seizure of Zaporizhzhya NPP posed a serious threat by increasing the risk of a nuclear accident, endangering the people of Ukraine and neighbouring States.

144. Agency staff must, therefore, be given access to all areas of the plant and be allowed to engage directly with local personnel without interference, and the safety of all individuals undertaking that work must be guaranteed. Germany had contributed €1.8 million in 2024 in order to ensure a continuous

presence of Agency experts at Ukraine's NPPs and to maintain overall support, both bilaterally and by the Agency. All Member States were encouraged to support the Agency's efforts in that regard.

145. Iran's continued escalation of proliferation-sensitive activities was moving the country further away from its commitments under the JCPOA. Much of Iran's nuclear programme was unprecedented for a State without a nuclear weapons programme and lacked any plausible civilian purpose. Germany called on Iran to reverse that trend and lay the groundwork for a diplomatic solution, to which his country remained committed. It also called on Iran to return to full implementation of its obligations under its safeguards agreement and to cooperate with the Agency. Germany commended the Agency on its professional verification and monitoring in Iran.

146. The build-up of the DPRK's nuclear programme demonstrated the importance of continued monitoring, and Germany supported the Agency's efforts to enhance readiness to verify that country's nuclear programme. Germany called on the DPRK to comply with its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing programmes, stop its dangerous rhetoric and return to full compliance with the NPT. It strongly encouraged diplomatic efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

147. The Agency's safeguards system was essential for the implementation of the NPT, and Germany expressed appreciation for the excellent work of the Agency's safeguards inspectors and supported the Agency in advancing nuclear safety standards, nuclear security guidance and its safeguards and verification activities worldwide. In order to forestall new threats, the highest standards of nuclear safety and security as well as safeguards needed to be considered at all times, including in connection with small modular reactors.

148. Germany had been a permanent member of the Board of Governors since 1973 and pledged to continue its expert involvement in the work of the Agency's bodies, events and missions. As the fourth-largest contributor to the Agency's budget, and an EU member State, Germany supported various fields of the Agency's work through extrabudgetary contributions of over €1.8 million towards the Agency's activities in Ukraine and the Division of Nuclear Security, as well as towards initiatives such as the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratories in Monaco, the Rays of Hope initiative, the Lise Meitner Programme and NUTEC Plastics.

149. He closed by lauding the dedicated and successful work done by the Agency.

150. Mr BACHIYSKI (Bulgaria), stating that his country aligned itself with the official EU statement published online, said that the nuclear safety and security risks resulting from the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of and unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine — in gross violation of international law, the principles of the UN Charter and the Agency's Statute — and the illegal seizure of Zaporizhzhya NPP were deeply worrisome. Bulgaria was grateful for the Agency's presence at all of Ukraine's nuclear sites to help alleviate the risks. The Seven Pillars and the Five Principles had to be respected.

151. Bulgaria urged the Russian Federation to stop its illegal war; abide by its international commitments; immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its armed forces, military equipment and personnel from Zaporizhzhya NPP and the entire territory of Ukraine; and return sovereign control of the plant to Ukraine as its legitimate owner. That represented the only rightful and sustainable solution to put an end to the present nuclear safety and security risks.

152. The Agency's safeguards system was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and underpinned the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Further efforts were needed to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, in particular through the universalization of the CSA and additional protocol as the present verification standard.

153. In that connection, Bulgaria called upon Iran to urgently and effectively fulfil its legal obligations under its CSA and subsidiary arrangements and to resume implementation of the additional protocol. Underlining the adoption by the Board of Governors of two resolutions in 2022 and one resolution in June 2024, Bulgaria urged Iran to clarify the outstanding safeguards issues without delay and to return immediately to meaningful cooperation with the Agency, including with regard to the implementation of all JCPOA-related monitoring and verification measures.

154. The DPRK, too, must comply with its international obligations by immediately abandoning its nuclear weapons, other WMDs, and ballistic missile and nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; by returning to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the Agency's safeguards system as a non-nuclear-weapon State; and by signing and ratifying the CTBT without delay.

155. Nuclear power continued to be a major component of Bulgaria's energy balance, featuring cutting-edge technology, efficient production, competitive prices and a high level of safety, security and radiation protection. His country attached great importance to nuclear power and its applications in the context of achieving a carbon-neutral economy, and commended the Agency on having organized the first ever Nuclear Energy Summit in March 2024, which had built on the historic inclusion of nuclear energy in the Global Stocktake agreed at COP28.

156. The safety and security of nuclear facilities were a major factor in the development of nuclear energy. In 2023, Units 5 and 6 of Kozloduy NPP had operated in full compliance with international safety standards, and activities were continuing at the plant to ensure safe long-term operation, as confirmed by the Agency's SALTO follow-up mission in 2023 and OSART mission planned for late 2024.

157. In approving Bulgaria's National Report, the Joint Eighth and Ninth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS had acknowledged the country's strong commitment to implementing its obligations under the Convention. That review meeting had had the highest number of participating countries to date, and Bulgaria looked forward to the subsequent meeting. His country also supported efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the review process under the CNS and the Joint Convention. Bulgaria called on all Member States to join the Joint Convention, and on Contracting Parties to actively participate in the Eighth Review Meeting to be held in March 2025.

158. The safe, secure and beneficial deployment of nuclear energy was not possible without a strong regulatory infrastructure. Accordingly, Bulgaria had, over the preceding three decades, regularly invited the Agency to perform peer reviews and was preparing for the subsequent IRRS mission in November 2024.

159. As knowledge management and capacity building were key elements of the safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities, his country supported the Agency's initiatives to promote the sustainability of education and training in all areas relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The first three-year action plan to implement Bulgaria's 2022 national strategy on human resources development in the nuclear sector had come into force.

160. Through its use in many areas of socioeconomic development, nuclear energy contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Bulgaria welcomed all Agency activities in line with its 'Atoms for Peace and Development' mandate and strongly supported the needs-based, result-driven and non-discriminatory TC programme. Initiatives like ZODIAC, to which Bulgaria contributed financially, NUTEC Plastics and Rays of Hope were exemplary of the Agency's engagement in global efforts to achieve the SDGs. Bulgaria's involvement in the TC programme for 2024–2025 comprised two national projects, in the field of human health and agriculture, and participation in more than 30 regional and

interregional projects. Furthermore, his country would sign a CPF during the current session of the General Conference.

161. Ms ŽVOKELJ (Slovenia) said that her country highly appreciated the crucial role of the Agency in increasingly challenging circumstances and looked forward to the Director General's upcoming visit. Slovenia aligned with the official EU statement.

162. While around 440 nuclear power reactors provided the world's electricity, many other applications of nuclear technology were also fundamental to people's daily lives. Owing to the growing global interest in nuclear energy, the increasing importance of energy security and the rising demand for energy as a result of technological advances, nuclear technology was becoming indispensable; and as the Agency and its professional staff played a key role in ensuring the safe and reliable use of such technologies, confidence in the Agency was essential.

163. Slovenia had been producing nuclear energy for decades, and its Krško NPP had successfully completed all relevant procedures and upgrades that would allow its extended operation until 2043. The new building for dry storage of spent fuel at the plant had been completed in January 2023, and construction had begun in 2024 on a repository for low and intermediate level waste.

164. In 2024, the Ljubljana Institute of Oncology had joined the Agency's flagship cancer initiative as a Rays of Hope Anchor Centre, becoming one of nine such centres worldwide. As a knowledge and capacity building hub for Europe, the institute would help to advance the goal of cancer care for all by strengthening radiation medicine capacity.

165. With climate change currently one of the greatest challenges facing the world, Slovenia was fully committed to meeting emission reduction targets and moving towards carbon neutrality, and was planning its energy transition on the basis of renewable and nuclear energy. The Slovenian Parliament had recently adopted a resolution on the long-term peaceful use of nuclear energy by an overwhelming majority. Having laid a solid foundation for the expansion of its national nuclear energy programme, Slovenia trusted that its citizens would show their support in the upcoming referendum, including for the construction of a new NPP.

166. Despite the revival of nuclear energy and nuclear technology, major proliferation challenges persisted. Slovenia remained deeply concerned about the continued expansion of Iran's nuclear programme and the ongoing development of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. A further alarming development was the presence of nuclear facilities in the midst of an ongoing war. The Russian Federation's illegal seizure of a Ukrainian NPP represented a qualitatively new and serious situation, surpassing previous nuclear safety and security risks and challenges. While commending the Director General's recent activities and visits to the region to assess nuclear safety and security first-hand, Slovenia remained concerned about the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP. The physical integrity of NPPs had to be ensured, regardless of their location, and it remained essential to uphold the Seven Pillars and Five Principles. As the Director General had said in his opening statement to the General Conference, NPPs should not be attacked under any circumstances.

167. A review of the existing nuclear security doctrine in crisis situations, including armed conflicts, was needed. Slovenia planned to initiate a discussion on measures that the international community should take to strengthen the international nuclear security regime, especially during an armed conflict.

168. Although Slovenia no longer chaired the informal Group of Friends of Arealess States, it would continue to help solve a problem that should not exist — ensuring the sovereign equality of all Member States within the Agency, and finding a home for 'arealess' States. Connected with that issue was the long overdue entry into force of the amendment to Article VI of the Statute. Her country, together with Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Namibia, the UK and the European Union, would be hosting

a side event on facilitating its swift entry into force. Collective efforts and the principle of sovereign equality were crucial, and Slovenia appealed to those Member States that had not yet accepted the amendment to do so without delay.

169. Slovenia recalled the importance of the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, which encouraged women to pursue a career in the nuclear field and supported an inclusive workforce that contributed to global scientific and technological innovation, and the Lise Meitner Programme, which provided women with opportunities to participate in a visiting professional programme.

170. In closing, she reiterated that collective work to prevent nuclear conflicts and disasters was essential in order to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

171. Mr BRKIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina), noting that his country aligned with the EU statement, said that the Director General merited praise for his able leadership in difficult times, and conveyed his country's gratitude for the Agency's continued effectiveness despite taxing circumstances.

172. Bosnia and Herzegovina was open to cooperation with Croatia to find a mutually acceptable solution — especially in terms of environmental protection — regarding Croatia's plan to build a radioactive waste storage facility at Trgovska Gora, near the border between the two countries and close to Una National Park. The facility would be used for the disposal of all institutional radioactive waste in Croatia, as well as half of the low and intermediate level waste from Krško NPP in Slovenia.

173. His country had submitted its opinion on the latest environmental impact study — from 2023 — and its Council of Ministers had determined the criteria for selecting an international law office to provide legal consulting services in connection with the cross-border procedure under the environmental impact study regarding the planned storage of radioactive waste at Trgovska Gora. The March 2024 statement by the Croatian Prime Minister to the effect that no disposal at Trgovska Gora would take place until 2028, as agreed with Slovenia, was most welcome.

174. Comprehensive and transparent prevention and control of significant adverse impacts on people and the environment, strengthened international cooperation and consideration of environmental factors at an early stage of the decision-making process through an environmental impact assessment at all relevant administrative levels were of utmost importance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which engaged in constructive dialogue with Croatia in the spirit of good neighbourly relations and with due respect for mutual interests, in accordance with the Espoo Convention.

175. Bosnia and Herzegovina had greatly benefited from the Agency's projects funded through the TCF, including equipment donations, knowledge transfer and the provision of expertise. With the Agency's support, his country had established a modern regulatory agency dedicated to ensuring the implementation of regulations and measures for the safe and secure management of radioactive sources; it would celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2024. Although its leadership had recently changed, the new leadership remained committed to fulfilling Bosnia and Herzegovina's international obligations and adhering to international standards and recommendations on nuclear safety and security.

176. In the near future, the regulatory body would focus on implementing the recommendations of the ORPAS and IRRS missions and addressing challenges related to the CNS and the Joint Convention. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have nuclear facilities, the country recognized the importance of those international instruments and encouraged other countries with similar nuclear capacities to adhere to them.

177. Bosnia and Herzegovina stressed the importance of all countries ratifying the CPPNM and A/CPPNM. His country additionally implemented its INSSP to enhance its nuclear security regime and contribute to global nuclear security. As well as endorsing the Agency's mandate with respect to nuclear

safety and security, Bosnia and Herzegovina supported the Agency's role in promoting safeguards and verification.

178. Ms JIMÉNEZ RIVERA (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country's ratification of the NPT and conclusion of a CSA and an additional protocol reflected its deep commitment to the Agency's principles, including compliance with international agreements and the promotion of nuclear safety and non-proliferation.

179. Bolivia recognized the Agency's fundamental role in ensuring the safe and responsible use of nuclear energy globally and appreciated its continuing support to promote technical cooperation and strengthen capacities for national development.

180. Her country was committed to building a more equitable, poverty-free society underpinned by the approach of 'living well', which aimed at development in harmony with the environment. Natural resource industrialization and energy diversification were fundamental drivers of progress in that regard, generating employment and improving quality of life, thereby contributing to the attainment of comprehensive, sustainable development with a view to economic independence. Bolivia had additionally bolstered capacities in strategic sectors through the Agency's TC programme, in support of those efforts.

181. Bolivia's peaceful nuclear programme — which sought to use science and technology to improve living conditions and contribute to sustainable development and industrialization — was based on two fundamental pillars: the national network of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy centres, which provided free cancer diagnosis, treatment and follow-up services, thus settling a historical social debt owed to cancer patients; and the Centre for Nuclear Technology Research and Development — the first of its kind in Bolivia — which supported scientific research and provided services to sectors such as mining, agriculture, water management and health. Located at 4000 metres above sea level in El Alto, the complex principally consisted of a pre-clinical radiopharmacy cyclotron centre for producing radiopharmaceuticals to meet national and regional demand; a multipurpose gamma irradiation centre that contributed to national food security; and a research reactor for education and training, basic and applied research, radioisotope production and neutron activation analysis. Bolivia would continue to work closely with the Agency to ensure that its nuclear facilities operated to the highest safety standards.

182. The sustainability and success of the nuclear programme relied largely on training highly qualified human resources. To that end, Bolivia had awarded 260 scholarships in areas related to nuclear technology and had established master's and doctoral programmes in collaboration with international institutions. Her country set great store by the inclusion of young people, especially women, in science and technology, as their participation was fundamental to building a more just and equitable future.

183. Mr NAZAR (Tajikistan), expressing gratitude to the Director General and the Agency's staff for their professional work in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation, said that his country had established a strong partnership with the Agency since it had become a Member State in 2001. The Agency's invaluable expertise and resources, including the Rays of Hope initiative, had helped to establish and enhance oncology centres in Tajikistan, raising the standards of cancer care in the country and enabling medical professionals to deliver world-class treatment. ZODIAC, and his country's ZODIAC National Laboratory, had helped to advance Tajikistan's understanding, monitoring and management of zoonotic diseases, ensuring safer environmental conditions.

184. The Agency's expertise had also equipped Tajikistan with a better understanding of the challenges posed by glacier retreat and its impact on water resources, enabling a more effective response. The Agency's work in that area contributed to attaining the objectives of the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, 2025 — an initiative proposed by Tajikistan and the subject of a UN General Assembly

resolution adopted in December 2022. His country hoped to cooperate with the Agency and other key partners on the conference on that topic scheduled to be held in Dushanbe in 2025.

185. The legacy of uranium mining and production in Tajikistan had an impact on the entire Central Asia region, and resolving the issue was an important and increasingly urgent task — otherwise, the release of radioactive and toxic waste into rivers in densely populated areas was inevitable. As radioactive pollution did not respect borders, it was imperative for the affected countries and the international community to join forces and act before irreversible damage could occur.

186. Tajikistan's 'National Concept' stated that all radiation contaminated objects at the waste sites required urgent remediation owing to their harmful effects on public well-being and the environment, as well as the high potential for causing emergencies. It was gratifying that those sites had been included in the Strategic Master Plan for Environmental Remediation of Uranium Legacy Sites in Central Asia, prepared under the Agency's leadership. For its part, Tajikistan was developing and adopting its second State programme — for the period 2025–2030 — to remediate territories affected by uranium mining. The Agency's staff involved in the Coordination Group for Uranium Legacy Sites deserved gratitude for their assistance in drafting the programme, and his country hoped for further cooperation and technical support from the Agency in order to equip the laboratory of the specialized centre for radioactive waste management, in accordance with the assessment of the Agency mission in May 2024 and the post-remediation monitoring of restored sites.

187. As maintaining a robust regulatory framework to ensure nuclear and radiation safety, security and safeguards was of paramount importance to his country, Tajikistan's regulatory authority had been steadfast in implementing stringent safety measures, conducting regular inspections and ensuring compliance with national and international standards. Commitment to effective regulation was critical to protecting public health and the environment while promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Tajikistan continued to strengthen its capabilities in nuclear security, in collaboration with international partners such as the Agency, in order to prevent unauthorized access, theft or misuse of nuclear and radioactive materials.

188. The regulatory authority also played a pivotal role in overseeing remediation activities related to uranium legacy sites, ensuring that processes aligned with international best practices and safety standards. Regular monitoring and assessment of those remediation efforts were essential in mitigating the risks posed by radioactive contamination and ensuring the long-term safety of the environment and public health. In addition, the regulatory body ensured the proper implementation of the country's safeguards agreements, further promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and fulfilling Tajikistan's obligations under the non-proliferation regime.

189. In October 2024, Tajikistan would inaugurate a new facility for its regulatory authority's technical and scientific support organization — a testament to its high-level commitment to address the critical issues of nuclear and radiation safety, security and safeguards. The new facility would further enhance the regulatory authority's capacity to perform its essential duties, ensuring a more secure and safer environment for current and future generations.

190. Tajikistan was also home to a regional training facility for WMDs, non-proliferation and export control, which had made a significant contribution to capacity building; it played a crucial role in regional capacity building by training more than 500 representatives of regulatory authorities, operators, law enforcement agencies, military organizations and other key stakeholders every year. The training programmes provided at the facility had bolstered the region's ability to prevent the proliferation of WMDs and to improve coordination among stakeholders responsible for enforcing export controls and ensuring security.

191. Lastly, despite the Statute clearly proclaiming the sovereign equality of all its members, the issue of Member States not belonging to any geographical area had been neglected since the founding of the Agency. Member States should have equal opportunities to take part in all the Agency's decision-making processes, to be elected to the Board of Governors or as officers of the General Conference, and to contribute to the work of the Agency. Tajikistan had recently submitted its instrument of acceptance of the Amendment to Article VI of the Statute, and it called on all Member States and the Secretariat to work to resolve the issue and to take immediate action to restore the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and the Agency's Statute.

192. Mr ARMAH (Liberia) said that the tireless work of the Director General and the Secretariat, and their commitment to bringing about global peace, security and development through the peaceful use of nuclear technology, merited deep gratitude. Liberia commended the Agency's role in promoting the safe and secure use of nuclear technology in areas such as health, agriculture, water resources and energy — sectors critical for the country's socioeconomic development — and appreciated the Agency's ongoing technical cooperation and assistance in support of its national objectives.

193. Liberia was in the early stages of developing a national framework for the peaceful use of nuclear technology, in particular in medical applications and agriculture. Its focus remained on expanding access to radiotherapy for cancer treatment, improving food security through nuclear techniques in agriculture, and ensuring environmental protection.

194. Substantial steps had been taken towards establishing a legal and regulatory framework for radiation protection and nuclear safety. The national programme on radiation safety was designed to preserve human health and the environment by ensuring that all applications of nuclear energy complied with the highest safety and security standards. In that connection, Liberia acknowledged the Agency's support and sought continued technical assistance to strengthen the regulatory framework and develop the required human capacity.

195. Liberia pledged to promptly meet its outstanding financial obligations to the Agency, both to restore its voting rights and full membership status with the attendant privileges and to take on a leadership role so as to contribute to the work of the Agency.

196. Recognizing the transformative potential of nuclear science in addressing key development challenges such as energy security, food security and public health, Liberia remained eager to further its cooperation with the Agency in the peaceful use of nuclear technology, and reaffirmed its commitment to the NPT and to the Agency's safeguards system, which were crucial in promoting global peace and security.

197. As a demonstration of its unflinching dedication to the objectives of the Agency, Liberia had recently acceded to or accepted the CPPNM and A/CPPNM, the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Agency, the CNS, the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance Convention.

198. He closed by stating that Liberia was committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in line with its development goals and the international framework established by the Agency, and would continue its engagement with the Agency and other Member States in the pursuit of a safer and more prosperous world.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.