

# General Conference

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## Sixty-eighth regular session

# Plenary

## Record of the Fifth Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 18 September 2024, at 10.00 a.m.*

**President:** Mr HAM Sang Wook (Republic of Korea)

**Later:** Mr ZABALGOITIA TREJO (Mexico)

**Later:** Mr HUSSEN (Iraq)

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## Abbreviations used in this record

AFCONE	African Commission on Nuclear Energy
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ALPS	Advanced Liquid Processing System
ARCAL	Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
Basic Safety Standards	Radiation Protection and Safety of Radiation Sources: International Basic Safety Standards
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COMPASS	Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for SSACs and SRAs
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
EPREV	Emergency Preparedness Review
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies

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

imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
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 Protocol	Joint Protocol Relating to the Application of the Vienna Convention and the Paris Convention
LEU	low enriched uranium
MW	megawatt
NHSI	Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSSC	Nuclear Security Support Centre
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
RANET	Response and Assistance Network
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RASIMS	Radiation Safety Information Management System

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

ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Site and External Events Design
SIT	sterile insect technique
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
SMR Platform	IAEA Platform on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action



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

1. Mr HAKKARAINEN (Finland) said that his country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union, as published online.
2. Defending, promoting and further strengthening the rules-based international order, including the global architecture for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, had become even more important owing to the deteriorating global security situation, with the Russian Federation's continued illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and the war raging in Gaza.
3. The NPT — which had served the international community well for over five decades — needed to be upheld and its relevance secured. Commending the Director General and Agency staff for their independent and professional work, he reiterated his country's steadfast support for the Agency in its crucial role in implementing the NPT and nuclear safeguards.
4. The Russian aggression against Ukraine was raising nuclear safety and security concerns. Finland had given its full backing to the Agency's work to maintain nuclear safety, security and safeguards and had continued to support it financially. The situation was especially critical at Europe's largest nuclear power facility — Zaporizhzhya NPP — which had been attacked and illegally seized by the Russian Federation. Finland demanded that the Russian Federation cease its military action and immediately withdraw all its military troops and other unauthorized personnel from Ukrainian nuclear facilities and the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine as a whole. Finland condemned the Russian Federation's deliberate attacks on Ukraine's energy and other civilian infrastructure, especially as the disruption to the electricity grid caused by those attacks threatened the safety of all nuclear facilities in Ukraine.
5. Together with Canada, Finland had prepared a draft resolution on nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine, which expressed strong support for the Agency's efforts in that area, including its continued presence at Ukrainian nuclear facilities and its provision of comprehensive technical assistance to Ukraine. Finland encouraged Member States to support the draft resolution.
6. Iran's lack of cooperation with the Agency was another source of concern, as the Agency had been unable to provide assurance that that country's nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful. Finland urged Iran to work with the Agency towards full compliance with its CSA obligations and to resolve the outstanding safeguards issues. Regrettably, the DPRK's continued nuclear weapons programme also remained a threat to regional and international peace and security.
7. Highlighting the Agency's essential responsibility in the area of nuclear security, his country thanked Australia and Kazakhstan for successfully co-chairing the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the Future (ICONS 2024) and welcomed their summary of the meeting, which would serve as a guiding document for years to come. For its part, Finland continued to provide financial and in-kind support to the Agency's nuclear security activities.
8. Climate change was a global challenge, to which nuclear energy provided a solution. Committed to meeting emission reduction targets and achieving carbon neutrality and, ultimately, carbon negativity, Finland was promoting nuclear power, including SMRs, as part of the national energy mix. Efforts were being made to revise the Nuclear Energy Act and other relevant regulations to take into account the use of SMRs and other new developments, such as in heat production. The proportion of electricity

generated from carbon dioxide-free sources in Finland was currently over 90%, roughly half of which was produced by nuclear power.

9. Addressing the challenge of spent nuclear fuel was crucial to maintaining public acceptance of nuclear power. Finland would be the first country in the world to start using deep geological disposal. In an important milestone, the trial run of the ONKALO final disposal facility had begun, the purpose of which was to verify the feasibility of the encapsulation and disposal processes before starting the actual operation of the facility, foreseen for 2025.

10. In collaboration with AFCONE, his country was implementing the ambitious five-year Uplifting Nuclear Safeguards in Africa project, which was co-financed by the European Union and Finland. In its first 18 months, over 25 African States had benefited from training provided by AFCONE and the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority.

11. Together with Ghana, Finland would co-chair the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in Vienna in November 2024. The Conference would demonstrate the benefits and versatility of nuclear technology, and the organizers were aiming for a high level of representation from Member States.

12. Given the importance of promoting gender equality in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Finland commended the Agency's strong commitment to gender equality and its gender mainstreaming efforts.

13. As its membership of the Board of Governors drew to a close, Finland's objective would continue to be to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and promote the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy and technologies. It strongly supported the Agency's independent expert role in safeguards verification and the promotion of nuclear safety and security worldwide.

14. Mr DARSALIA (Georgia) said that his country aligned itself with the statement of the European Union.

15. Georgia condemned the Russian Federation's brutal, illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and its indiscriminate attacks against civilian infrastructure, including its systematic missile strikes against Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Furthermore, Georgia reiterated its concern at the Russian Federation's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and threats to use nuclear force, which seriously undermined the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

16. Nuclear safety and security risks were likely to persist as long as the Russian Federation illegally retained control over Zaporizhzhya NPP. The Russian Federation must comply with international law and heed the relevant resolutions of the General Conference and the Board of Governors.

17. Georgia commended the Director General and the Agency's staff and experts for their work and courageous presence at Zaporizhzhya NPP and at Ukraine's other nuclear power installations, where they were tirelessly and professionally monitoring the nuclear safety and security situation, implementing safeguards and providing regular, impartial first-hand information to the international community as well as important technical assistance and support to Ukraine.

18. His country attached great importance to the Agency's core mandate in the fields of nuclear safeguards, safety and security, nuclear energy and technical cooperation. An advocate of the universal and effective implementation of the NPT, Georgia underlined the importance of the Agency's safeguards system in the implementation of the Treaty.

19. Georgia was committed to strengthening nuclear security and the exclusively peaceful use of atomic energy and wholeheartedly supported the Agency's efforts to foster international peace, security



and development. To further facilitate those core functions and activities of the Agency, his country had, for the first time, submitted its candidacy for membership of the Board of Governors for the 2024–2026 term. Georgia would act responsibly and would strongly support dialogue and cooperation among Member States to promote the Agency's core objectives across all key areas. It remained committed to nuclear safety, security and safeguards and would continue to fully support the TC programme, which addressed the needs and priorities of Member States.

20. Since the restoration of Georgia's independence, the Russian Federation's repeated breaches of its international obligations with regard to the prevention of, and response to, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats had weakened his country's national security. The Russian Federation's illegal occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions posed a significant challenge to non-proliferation. Although attempts to smuggle nuclear and radioactive material through those regions had been prevented as a result of effective measures taken by Georgian law enforcement agencies, the absence of an international presence in the occupied Georgian territories made it impossible to conduct verification on the ground; the threat of proliferation in those areas therefore remained high on the regional and international security agenda.

21. Given its strategic location in the Black Sea region, Georgia strove to ensure high standards of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security and safety at national, regional and international levels and played an essential role in supporting the global security architecture. His country highly appreciated the technical and financial assistance and active contributions provided by the Agency and its partners — namely the European Union, Sweden and the USA — in developing national regulations and systems for nuclear and radiation safety and security.

22. Georgia looked forward to working with fellow Member States as a member of the Board of Governors to ensure that the Agency remained able to fully discharge its mandate.

23. Mr THAMMAVONG (Lao People's Democratic Republic), commending the Agency for its tireless efforts to advance the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development while ensuring global safety and security, said that the Agency's mission had become particularly vital in the face of numerous global challenges, including climate change and concerns about energy and food security.

24. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had always attached great importance to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and remained a steadfast supporter of global initiatives aimed at creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. It had long been a committed party to the NPT, the TPNW, the CPPNM and its Amendment and related frameworks. Its advocacy of those key instruments underscored its dedication to promoting disarmament and ensuring that nuclear energy was utilized for peaceful development purposes.

25. In that context, his country was pleased to announce that, in 2024, it had officially joined other Member States in adopting the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary guidance. In addition, it had taken practical steps to implement safety measures, including issuing a ministerial regulation on radiation protection and the safety of radiation sources. Later in 2024, it would begin the process of reviewing the implementation of its current INSSP and, in collaboration with the Agency, preparing for consultations on its second INSSP, which would build on the success of the first Plan by focusing on addressing national priorities and strengthening the country's capacity to meet existing and emerging challenges.

26. At regional level, the Lao People's Democratic Republic continued to uphold the principles of the Bangkok Treaty and to actively support ASEANTOM, including by hosting the Network's 11th annual meeting in August 2024, in cooperation with the Agency. During that meeting, participants had taken note of updates to regional projects, such as the ASEAN–EU cooperation project to establish a regional early warning radiation monitoring network and the 2024–2028 ASEANTOM work plan,

which supported the implementation of the 2023–2027 Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia NWFZ.

27. As one of the least developed countries in the world, and one which made only limited use of nuclear technologies, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic placed significant value on the Agency’s role in promoting knowledge transfer, technical cooperation and capacity building regarding the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. By collaborating with the Agency, it had successfully implemented projects using nuclear technology to improve agricultural productivity, enhance food security and combat malnutrition — advancements that highlighted the transformative potential of nuclear science in the areas of agriculture and public health.

28. In the health sector, his country prioritized the strengthening of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services. With Agency support, it was enhancing its national capacity to diagnose and treat non-communicable diseases, especially cancer, through the establishment of new radiology and radiotherapy facilities, thereby offering better health care to its citizens.

29. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic had made significant strides in developing a robust regulatory framework for nuclear safety and security. Through technical cooperation with the Agency, it had improved its national radiation safety infrastructure, ensuring that nuclear technology use met the highest standards of safety and security. It had also benefited from the Agency’s training programmes, fellowships and expert missions, which greatly contributed to national capacity building in that field.

30. His country remained committed to working closely with the Agency to explore new applications of nuclear technology through Atoms4Food and Rays of Hope in order to drive socioeconomic development, improve public health and protect the environment. Deeply grateful for the unwavering support and partnership provided by the Agency, other Member States and relevant stakeholders, it sought continued assistance and support in the areas of capacity building, advanced training, technical guidance and shared best practices with a view to further enhancing its national capabilities in radiological and nuclear applications.

31. Ms GUEVARA DE LA JARA (Peru) said that her country remained convinced of the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for the development of nations, and of the crucial role that the Agency played in advancing nuclear applications for nuclear power generation, health, food and agriculture, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the environment. Peru was grateful for its continued close cooperation with the Agency; in particular, the Director General’s visit to the country in June 2024 had marked a milestone in relations between the Agency and Peru and had reinforced the country’s commitment to the use of nuclear technology in areas such as mining, food and agriculture, and health and fisheries — areas with an immense potential for productive, economic and social impact. During the visit, Peru had formalized its membership of Atoms4Food, which was being implemented in close coordination with leading institutions in the field such as the renowned La Molina National Agricultural University, and had signed a statement of intent on the exploration and exploitation of lithium with a view to contributing to sustainable mining.

32. To support cancer control, Peru had joined Rays of Hope and, in April 2024, had received a valuable impACT mission, which had provided a multisectoral assessment of the country’s cancer control system. It was in the process of implementing the mission’s findings and recommendations, having identified specific courses of action related to decentralization and coverage policies, equipment, and professional development in nuclear medicine and radiology.

33. Peru participated in various high-impact Agency programmes dedicated to human, animal and environmental health, such as ZODIAC. In addition, the support provided through NUTEC Plastics was especially important for countries such as Peru, which had a coastline stretching over 2000 km. Peru had benefited from the Agency’s support in determining the isotopic signature of an oil spill that had

occurred in 2022, enabling it to establish a baseline for measuring pollution and improving its national laboratories.

34. As a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty in possession of a scientific base in the Antarctic and a renowned Antarctic research vessel — the *BAP Carrasco* — Peru viewed the Agency's research work on that continent with great interest. It also urged the Agency to continue making a technical contribution to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution to assist in developing and implementing a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, especially in the marine environment.

35. An advocate of multilateral spaces to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of good practices in the nuclear field, his country highlighted the creation of the Regional Network of Research Reactors and Related Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, which had been chaired by Peru throughout its first year, during which the Network had begun its work in areas such as operations, reactor maintenance, and scientific and industrial applications for medicine and mining.

36. In July 2024, Peru had assumed the presidency of FORO, which, with its 27 years of solid experience and its 11 member countries, had carried out a number of noteworthy activities to promote the highest levels of radiation protection and nuclear safety and security in all activities involving radioactive materials in the region, often in collaboration with the Agency. Those activities included the recent signing of the Declaration on Integration and Safety for the Sustainable Development of the Region (Declaration of Asunción).

37. Although geopolitical tensions and mistrust had substantially increased the risk posed by nuclear weapons, there was no justification for absurd, zero-sum rhetoric about their use. In the face of the various threats to global security, it was necessary to emphasize the importance of the international instruments that formed part of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, in particular the NPT and the CTBT. Peru urged those countries that had not yet ratified or acceded to those instruments to do so without delay.

38. His country highlighted the indispensable work carried out by the Agency in ensuring a safe global nuclear environment and in promoting dialogue and diplomacy as a means of resolving conflict. It would continue to work with the Agency both in that regard and in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in the certainty that such collaboration would enable the international community to overcome global challenges and move towards a safer and more sustainable future.

39. Ms SEBASTIÁN DE ERICE (Spain) said that her country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union.

40. As Spain had advocated at the UN General Assembly almost 20 years previously, during a time of difficult circumstances for the international community, effective multilateralism remained the best way of resolving conflict and achieving a climate of trust and cooperation — and all the more so during the present turmoil and anxiety.

41. Since February 2022, the world had borne witness to a military invasion that undermined the very foundations of the United Nations. In those especially difficult circumstances, Spain wished to reaffirm the validity of the principles of the UN Charter and the need to respect international law. Spain stood in solidarity with Ukraine and its people — the victims of the attack — and supported Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Further, it reiterated its strong condemnation of the Russian Federation's aggression, which had already cost too many lives, and urged that country to comply with international law by withdrawing all its troops from Ukraine and ceasing its illegal, illegitimate and unjustified aggression.

42. Spain was extremely concerned about the risks posed by the Russian military aggression to the security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, especially Zaporizhzhya NPP, and had therefore acted swiftly to support common efforts to ensure nuclear safety, donating both funds and equipment. A few days before the current meeting, the Board of Governors had had the opportunity to hear the Director General present the alarming findings of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya: the Director General's Seven Pillars — which Spain supported — had been compromised. Moreover, explosions, drone attacks, gunfire and fires in the vicinity of the plant, in addition to the presence of military equipment, continued to seriously jeopardize the Five Principles. Having full confidence in the Director General and the work of the Agency's staff in Ukraine, Spain called for the cessation of Russian military operations in the vicinity of the plant and urged the Russian Federation to comply with the Board of Governor's resolutions.

43. Spain reiterated its full confidence in the Secretariat's work to verify Iran's compliance with its commitments and obligations within the framework of the JCPOA and its safeguards agreement, and urged Iran to do its utmost to enable the Agency to fulfil that role. It was imperative that the Agency was able to perform its verification and monitoring activities in full to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

44. It was regrettable that, despite intensive diplomatic negotiations and the commendable efforts made by the JCPOA coordinator, it had not yet been possible to reach an agreement that would allow a return to full implementation of the Plan. Spain noted with concern that Iran had continued to systematically pursue activities inconsistent with the JCPOA and thus move away from the possibility of returning to the Plan. Spain called on Iran to comply with its legal safeguards obligations, including by implementing the Board of Governors' resolutions of June and November 2022 and of June 2024, and accept the Director General's offer to engage substantially and proactively with the Agency.

45. Similarly, Spain strongly condemned the DPRK's continuing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and urged it to comply with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Spain appreciated and supported the Agency's work to monitor the DPRK's nuclear activities.

46. With the increasing spread of nuclear technologies, ensuring nuclear safety had become all the more essential. Spain's comprehensive system of institutions — such as the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, the Ministry of the Interior and the Nuclear Safety Council — supported a robust national regime for nuclear and radiological safety and security. Spanish institutions also provided the Agency with experts and human and financial resources for its TC activities, in particular through the Research Centre for Energy, Environment and Technology, a strategic partner of ARCAL, to which Spain made both in-kind and financial contributions.

47. The different conventions under the Agency's scope were essential for guaranteeing the safety and security of all nuclear applications. Spain actively participated in all meetings of the parties to those instruments during their respective review cycles.

48. The Agency's review services helped achieve continuous improvements in the safety of facilities and activities using ionizing radiation. Spain was well versed in those tools, as a result of sending experts to participate in missions to other countries and hosting such missions in order to improve its own practices. In 2024, Spain had been reviewing its improvement plans, which would be analysed during follow-up missions in 2025.

49. Having participated in ICONS 2024, Spain thanked Australia and Kazakhstan for their excellent work as Co-Presidents of the event, and in particular for their statement, which Spain had signed alongside dozens of other Member States.

50. More than 50 Spanish experts had participated in the 29th IAEA Fusion Energy Conference. The International Fusion Materials Irradiation Facility project, in which Spain was participating, was expected to provide scientific infrastructure that would facilitate greater international collaboration in the testing of materials to be used in future fusion power plants.

51. Since the previous regular session of the General Conference, FORO had carried out various activities, including signing the Declaration of Asunción and publishing the results of three projects on the training and licensing of reactor operators, radiopharmacy inspection procedures, and maintenance and verification for the transport of radioactive materials, thereby demonstrating its complementarity with the Agency's activities.

52. Gender equality was not only a human right and a moral imperative, but also a fundamental pillar for building a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. In line with its feminist foreign policy, Spain advocated gender parity and the incorporation of gender perspectives in the Agency's programmes and activities and had contributed €900 000 to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

53. Lessons from recent years had shown clearly that concerted action by the international community was more important than ever and that multilateral institutions needed to be able to respond to major global challenges. It was therefore crucial that the Agency, as an essential part of the multilateral system and the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, remained able to adapt quickly and respond proactively to new challenges. Spain reiterated its support for the Agency and thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their tireless work to fulfil their tasks with impartiality and professionalism.

54. Ms MUÑOZ MERA (Ecuador) said that, as a State Party to the first NWFZ in a densely populated area, her country promoted peace and universal disarmament, condemned the use of WMDs and remained committed to nuclear non-proliferation. It opposed all non-peaceful nuclear programmes and reiterated that joining the TPNW, the NPT and the CTBT must not be seen as optional, but rather as a priority for the international community.

55. Ecuador supported the Agency's verification and safeguards system and underscored the importance of universal adherence without exception, in particular by countries that were currently outside the system.

56. In line with its principled position on nuclear non-proliferation, her country firmly believed that all NPT States Parties had the inalienable right to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. While each State was responsible for regulating and maintaining the safety and security of nuclear material and radioactive sources, Ecuador recognized the Agency's contribution to the development of security standards and a safety culture.

57. Ecuador supported the Agency's activities to ensure the application of international safety norms and standards during the discharge of treated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP and recognized the Government of Japan's will to ensure that the water was discharged safely.

58. More than two and a half years had passed since the beginning of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, which was in clear violation of the UN Charter and international law, including humanitarian law. Disheartened by the precarious situation at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhya NPP and the fact that the Seven Pillars had been totally or partially compromised, Ecuador noted with concern the escalation of the conflict and urgently called on the parties to exercise military restraint — attacking an NPP was unacceptable and reprehensible. The parties to the conflict should seek rapprochement leading to a ceasefire that would allow for the start of a dialogue process with a view to putting an end to the war and adopting a peace formula that was acceptable to both countries and that would guarantee lasting stability in the region, with the support of the international community.

Expressing its appreciation for the efforts made by the Director General to help maintain the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, Ecuador called for the Agency's technical missions to Ukraine to continue.

59. Ecuador valued the Agency's activities to support the development of nuclear science, technology and applications to help meet the sustainable development needs of Member States. The Agency's actions to address ocean acidification and implement NUTEC Plastics, and in particular its support for establishing a microplastics laboratory in the Galapagos Islands, were of particular significance. In addition, with the Agency's support, Ecuador had expanded its use of SIT to mitigate the risk caused by pests that affected non-traditional fruits destined for export.

60. Rays of Hope had made a valuable contribution to developing and strengthening her country's national radiation safety infrastructure. Her country hoped to cooperate further with the Agency to acquire advanced diagnostic and radiotherapy equipment to strengthen its national efforts in the fight against cancer.

61. The work of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture to disseminate knowledge on the use of nuclear techniques in food and agriculture and to provide emergency support for dealing with the avian influenza virus was appreciated. Ecuador welcomed the progress made by Atoms4Food in addressing the challenges posed by food security and climate change. While Ecuador welcomed the progress made over the past year towards resolving the problem of 'arealess' Member States, some Member States regrettably continued to be deprived of their right to be elected to the Board of Governors or other regionally elected functions. Ecuador urged the members of regional groups to continue working towards the full participation of all Member States.

62. Highlighting the importance of the Agency's TC programme and the professional work of the Department of Technical Cooperation in the region, her country called attention to the progress made in implementing its national TC programme for 2024–2025, which included projects on strengthening the use of SIT, enhancing regulatory and radiation safety infrastructure to protect persons and the environment and improving marine biodiversity conservation capabilities. Ecuador also underscored the relevance of ARCAL, within the framework of which it participated in 30 regional projects and 7 interregional projects. Lastly, she expressed her country's support for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

63. Mr STOIAN (Romania) said that his country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union.

64. Praising the continuous efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to uphold nuclear safety and security and promote the peaceful use of nuclear technologies, despite the current challenges, Romania noted that the context in which the General Conference was meeting continued, unfortunately, to be marked by the Russian Federation's unjustifiable and illegal war against Ukraine. Romania reiterated its strong condemnation of the Russian Federation's actions, which were in violation of international law. His country also remained deeply concerned regarding the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP. Massive Russian attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure had further worsened an already dangerous situation, which also affected Rivne NPP and South Ukraine NPP.

65. Romania reiterated its call to the Russian Federation to stop its illegal war and occupation, immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and hand over control of Zaporizhzhya NPP to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

66. Since its entry into force, the NPT had been the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and a key instrument for maintaining international peace and security. Romania remained committed to

the NPT's fundamental principles. Praising the Agency's efforts to perform its verification activities, his country renewed its call for the entry into force and universalization of the CTBT and for the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

67. Reiterating its continued support for the Agency's safeguards system — a fundamental instrument for ensuring global non-proliferation — Romania advocated the universalization of the CSA and the additional protocol, which together constituted the current verification standard. It encouraged all States to become parties to the relevant treaties and conventions aimed at creating a strong nuclear safety and security regime.

68. Committed to maintaining the highest standards of nuclear safety and security, Romania had received a full-scope IRRS mission in late 2023, which had concluded that the country's regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety was comprehensive, covering all facilities and activities. Furthermore, it had successfully established an emergency information and training centre, which would help strengthen capabilities in south-eastern Europe. Romania was grateful to Norway for its support for that important project.

69. In 2025, Romania would host a Level 3 Convention Exercise — the highest level available — with the aim of evaluating the implementation of international emergency response arrangements and capabilities for severe nuclear emergencies. The exercise would build on the experience gained during a series of national exercises which his country had conducted and to which the Agency had provided valuable contributions and expertise.

70. As a member of the NSSC Network, Romania had continued to develop its National Centre for Nuclear Security Training and stood ready to cooperate with, and assist, other countries in the region. Moreover, the Horia Hulubei National Institute for Research and Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering — which provided valuable inputs to the field of nuclear forensics both nationally and internationally — remained prepared to provide assistance to regional and international partners in responding to the unauthorized use of nuclear or other radioactive materials. For its part, Romania was grateful for its bilateral cooperation with the specialized offices of the US National Nuclear Security Administration in building the country's nuclear security capacities.

71. Recognizing the role of nuclear energy in combating climate change, Romania had set ambitious decarbonization targets and was investing in increasing its capacity to generate energy from nuclear sources. The national operator Nuclearelectrica, which played a key part in supporting those objectives, was carrying out a series of strategic projects, including refurbishing Unit 1 of Cernavodă NPP, completing the construction of Units 3 and 4, developing SMRs, harvesting nuclear isotopes for medical purposes and establishing a tritium removal facility.

72. Romania was one of the first countries in Europe in a position to deploy SMRs and provide a base for producing and assembling components and a hub for preparing and training future operators and specialists, thereby catalysing their use in the region. It was committed to ensuring nuclear safety and security during SMR design, development and deployment and remained a supporter of the NHSI.

73. As excellence was achievable only where preceded by preparedness, Romania accorded particular importance to training new generations of nuclear specialists, involving not only graduates of nuclear physics and engineering programmes but also graduates in other related fields as necessary to develop the infrastructure for nuclear installations.

74. Since serving on the Board of Governors between 2008 and 2010, Romania had made notable achievements in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and had collaborated extensively with the Agency and other Member States. It was proud to be moving towards developing and integrating new

technologies with a view to creating a more sustainable future using nuclear energy. With its widely recognized expertise, it was advancing towards becoming a regional hub of excellence in the field.

75. On the basis of its extensive track record and its active contribution to scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field, Romania had put forward its candidacy to serve on the Board of Governors for the period 2025–2027. It looked forward to being a Board member again and having the opportunity to contribute to fulfilling the Agency’s important mission.

76. Romania would continue to support the Agency’s mission in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, thereby contributing to international peace and security and the attainment of the SDGs. It reaffirmed its appreciation for and long-standing commitment to the Agency’s TC programme, which it expressed through national voluntary contributions.

77. Mr SKINNER-KLÉE ARENALES (Guatemala) said that, in a highly conflicted and therefore imperilled world, the Agency was more important than ever. The enormous challenges facing the world were not detached from the work of the Agency, which continued to meet all its obligations under its statutory mandate, finding mechanisms to help Member States face challenges and adversity and developing new, useful initiatives and techniques in service of humanity. Guatemala therefore acknowledged the valuable role of the Secretariat staff and the leadership of the Director General, whose commitment and dynamism inspired the Agency to continue working towards its underlying purpose.

78. In a prime example of international cooperation in the use of nuclear applications developed by the Agency, Guatemala had become home to the El Pino plant for the production of sterile Mediterranean fruit flies using peaceful nuclear techniques, which supported the attainment of the SDGs. Established through trilateral cooperation between Guatemala, Mexico and the USA, the plant provided benefits not only to the three collaborating countries but also to any country wishing to deepen its knowledge of nuclear science applications and receive training in the production of sterile insects for use in sustainable agriculture.

79. His country welcomed the Director General’s initiatives to further develop the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, notably Rays of Hope, Atoms4Food, NUTEC Plastics and ZODIAC. Through those initiatives, the Agency was providing Member States with the know-how and good practices necessary to overcome the complex challenges faced in crucial areas for development.

80. Guatemala was grateful to the Division for Latin America for its support and guidance in implementing the country’s CPF for 2022–2027. The priority areas for cooperation set out in the CPF were directly linked to 9 of the 17 SDGs, covering topics such as human health, nutrition and food security, including priority actions related to cancer control and nuclear medicine. The Agency played an important role in strengthening Member States’ capacities in such areas through PACT and Rays of Hope.

81. The TC programme was undoubtedly the Agency’s key instrument for sharing the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology with Member States. Sufficient, assured and predictable funding for technical cooperation was therefore important, in addition to the continuation of the Scientific Forum, the current edition of which was focused on agriculture and Atoms4Food.

82. Guatemala encouraged the Agency to continue providing opportunities through initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, with the aim of increasing the number of women in the nuclear field and achieving a more balanced representation of women within the Agency.

83. Given the importance of responsible nuclear energy use, it was in the interest of the entire international community to make progress in nuclear safety and security. Nonetheless, such efforts must not hinder, restrict or prejudice the inalienable right of countries — especially developing countries — to gain access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.



84. Guatemala had witnessed the importance of the Agency's independence, professionalism and expertise in enabling it to carry out its mandate in an impartial manner, in particular during the verification of safeguards — a fundamental pillar of the non-proliferation regime which must be respected by Member States without excuse, pretext or distinction. Guatemala reaffirmed its support for the Agency's efforts to implement the safeguards regime.

85. In the current international context, and especially given the threats to nuclear facilities such as Zaporizhzhya NPP, it had unfortunately become essential to redirect the Agency's efforts towards verifying and upholding nuclear safety, security and safeguards. Guatemala applauded the Director General's work in that field, including his valuable visits to NPPs in Iran, the Russian Federation, Syria and Ukraine.

86. In closing, he reiterated that the only absolute guarantee against the threat posed by nuclear weapons was to prohibit and eliminate them. Only through complete, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament within a clearly established timeframe could collective security and development be achieved.

**Mr Zabaloitia Trejo (Mexico), Vice-President, took the Chair.**

87. Mr SIAM (Bangladesh), expressing appreciation to the Director General and his team for their leadership, commitment and dedication, said that his country recognized the Agency's central role in promoting international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, strengthening disarmament and the non-proliferation regime and assisting Member States to fulfil their nuclear safety, security and safeguards obligations. Efforts to strengthen nuclear security, safety and safeguards should not, however, hamper international cooperation in peaceful nuclear activities or limit Member States' rights to the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology.

88. The world was standing on the cusp of a new era, one marked by unprecedented challenges and opportunities as countries grappled with the climate crisis and with growing energy, water and food security concerns. Bangladesh acknowledged the Agency's outstanding contribution to global peace, security and prosperity and its central role in supporting Member States, through the TC programme, to apply nuclear science and technology to address their development priorities, including the SDGs. In that context, Bangladesh applauded Atoms4Food, Atoms4NetZero, Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, the Global Water Analysis Laboratory (GloWAL) Network, COMPASS, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, the Lise Meitner Programme, the SMR Platform and the NHSI.

89. Like many other developing nations, Bangladesh faced significant challenges in meeting its growing energy needs while simultaneously addressing climate change and ensuring water and food security. It therefore deeply appreciated the Agency's support in the use of plant mutation breeding, isotope hydrology and related techniques to improve crop, soil and water management, which had enabled Bangladesh to attain a sustainable food supply despite experiencing population growth and increasingly harsh climate conditions. In addition, the use of nuclear technology in the national health sector had been growing rapidly, with a total of 23 nuclear medicine facilities and 24 radiotherapy facilities currently providing high-quality diagnosis and treatment services to cancer patients in Bangladesh.

90. The Agency's TC programmes had been crucial in helping Bangladesh reap the benefits of nuclear science and technology. Over the previous five decades, Bangladesh had collaborated with the Agency in implementing TC projects in the areas of agriculture, health, hydrology, capacity building and nuclear and radiation safety. Bangladesh was currently implementing six TC projects, covering health care, the environment, nuclear energy and food safety. It had also finalized its CPF for 2024–2032, which was due to be signed later in the year.

91. As a country on the climate front line, Bangladesh was deeply committed to embracing a green component in its energy portfolio in order to combat climate change and ensure energy security. The first fresh nuclear fuel had been delivered to Rooppur NPP in October 2023, and the country was advancing at full pace towards the successful commissioning of its first reactor. The Agency had been a key partner throughout that journey.

92. Bangladesh appreciated the Agency's continuous assistance in providing peer review and advisory services, including Phase 1 and 2 INIR missions, SEED missions and IRRS missions, to assess the status of nuclear power infrastructure development in the country. It hoped to receive pre-OSART, IPPAS, EPREV and Phase 3 INIR missions soon, and requested the Agency to continue providing training and education to support national nuclear capacity building and knowledge management.

93. His country reaffirmed its commitment to harnessing the peaceful potential of nuclear energy for the benefit of humanity while ensuring the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards in cooperation with the Agency and other international partners. Bangladesh would continue to uphold the Agency's global mandate. A safer and sustainable future for the generations to come could be built through the peaceful and safe use of nuclear science.

94. Mr LATROCH (Algeria) said that his country could not ignore the terrible conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially the Gaza Strip, where for nearly a year the colonialist occupier had been conducting a war of genocide and destruction, in which not even the West Bank and Jerusalem had been spared its barbaric violations. Journalists, aid workers and UN personnel had also not escaped attack — in fact, employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been targeted to prevent them carrying out their noble work.

95. Condemning the occupier's crimes of genocide in the strongest possible terms, Algeria reiterated its firm and unconditional solidarity with the Palestinian people.

96. In the face of the unprecedented humanitarian crisis and the systematic destruction of infrastructure, especially hospitals, Algeria called on the Agency to identify the locations of all radioactive sources held at cancer care centres in the Gaza Strip that had been bombed and to establish an emergency programme to provide the State of Palestine with the necessary equipment for cancer diagnosis and treatment. Noting that the Agency had recently identified food security as a priority, Algeria further encouraged the Agency to support efforts to re-establish the food system in the Gaza Strip.

97. Algeria would continue its efforts, including through its role on the UN Security Council, to secure an immediate ceasefire, ensure the urgent and unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid and guarantee the protection of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the international community had a responsibility to compel the occupier to implement the orders of the International Court of Justice setting out provisional measures on preventing the genocide of the Palestinian people and ending the immunity of the occupier.

98. Algeria would continue to strive to achieve full membership in the United Nations and all other international organizations, including the Agency, for the State of Palestine, in line with the resolution on the matter adopted at the sixty-seventh session of the General Conference. Algeria welcomed the progress made in that regard, including the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-10/23 and the subsequent assumption by the delegate of the State of Palestine of his rightful place among other Member States at the current session of the General Assembly.

99. Welcoming the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to recover the lands stolen from them by the occupier, Algeria underscored the

importance of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

100. Reiterating its support for the Agency's mandate, Algeria called for greater efforts to ensure a balance among the three pillars of its work. Given the need to continue strengthening the contribution of nuclear technology to health, agriculture, water resources management, the environment and power generation, his country expressed support for the Director General's initiatives, in particular Rays of Hope, to which it would continue to contribute, primarily through its regional anchor centres, the Pierre and Marie Curie Centre and Bab El Oued Teaching Hospital.

101. In line with its own efforts to develop an ambitious national programme to modernize its agricultural sector and enhance food security and sustainability, Algeria supported the Agency's work to enhance food security and nutrition in Member States, especially through Atoms4Food, and praised the choice of topic for the 2024 Scientific Forum, namely 'Atoms4Food: Better Agriculture for Better Life'.

102. Algeria was a firm supporter of the Agency's TC programme, which played a central role in strengthening national capacities. Praising the high level of implementation achieved in TC activities, it reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing cooperation with the Agency within the framework of its CPF for 2024–2029, especially in the areas of health, energy, agriculture, water resources and food.

103. Reiterating its commitment to AFRA, Algeria expressed pride in all that had been achieved during its tenure as Chair and called on the Agency and all partners to increase their support for the aims of AFRA. Algeria would continue to place its national capacities, and especially its five regional designated centres, at the disposal of African States to help develop their human resources.

104. Despite the many steps taken to rid the world of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs, that goal was far from being achieved. It was worrisome that obstacles remained to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other WMDs, especially as regional legal instruments establishing NWFZs, such as the Pelindaba Treaty, were essential for regional and international peace and security.

105. Algeria continued to suffer the effects of the French nuclear tests conducted in the areas of In Ekker and Reggane. It therefore remained convinced that the entry into force of the CTBT would help establish an effective nuclear disarmament regime.

106. Mr WETZIG (Chile), reiterating his country's commitment to disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, human rights, international humanitarian law, multilateralism and transparent, inclusive and democratic debate, said that his country had been committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament from the outset, having participated actively in the negotiations on the Antarctic Treaty, which had established the first NWFZ, and having subsequently promoted the creation of the first NWFZ in a densely populated area through the Tlatelolco Treaty.

107. Chile recognized the value of the TPNW, which complemented the NPT — the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It called on the international community to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT.

108. Appreciative of the Agency's role in promoting and facilitating research, development and the practical application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, Chile highlighted the Agency's flagship initiatives, notably Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, Atoms4Food and NUTEC Plastics.

109. Chile understood the importance of the TC programme; indeed interregional, regional and bilateral projects formed the backbone of its work with the Agency. Such initiatives were examples of effective multilateralism, as they translated into direct and tangible benefits for communities. Chile's

current bilateral cooperation programme covered a variety of priority areas, such as human health, the environment, food safety and radiation safety. His country also recognized the Agency's work with regional institutions, especially ARCAL, which had celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2024 and which was currently presided over by Chile.

110. The Director General's visit to Chile in April 2024 had marked a milestone in the country's relationship with the Agency. The agenda of the visit had included meetings with high-level authorities and a tour of Chile's nuclear research reactor, which reflected the multidimensional scope of the TC programme. During the visit, Chile and the Director General had signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation as part of NUTEC Plastics — a project of particular importance for Chile, given its 'turquoise' foreign policy, which prioritized initiatives focused on the global climate crisis and ocean protection — in addition to a cooperation agreement on lithium mining. Agreement had also been reached on expanding the continued implementation of Rays of Hope.

111. All States had the right to develop and benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In exchange, they were responsible for maintaining and strengthening the safety of their installations, ensuring the sound handling of radioactive materials and bolstering the global nuclear safety regime. Consequently, Chile was party to various international instruments on nuclear safety, including the Joint Convention. In that connection, it welcomed the convening of ICONS 2024 and recognized the value of the Co-Presidents' statement.

112. With regard to safeguards, Chile maintained up-to-date information on the use and design of its nuclear facilities and on the nuclear material in its possession. It also maintained rigorous controls to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials for non-peaceful uses or undeclared activities.

113. His country shared the Agency's concern regarding nuclear facilities in Ukrainian territory and joined other States in calling on the parties involved to avoid all military actions that could endanger the safety or integrity of those facilities. Underscoring the importance of the Seven Pillars and the Five Principles, Chile praised the technical, professional and independent work carried out by the Agency and called for the continued presence of its staff at nuclear sites in Ukrainian territory.

114. It was regrettable that Iran had failed to implement its commitments under the JCPOA and the additional protocol. He expressed his country's concern regarding the lack of progress in resolving the outstanding safeguards issues.

115. Chile urged the DPRK to renounce all its non-peaceful nuclear activities, swiftly return to membership of the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and promptly sign and ratify the CTBT.

116. The achievement of gender equality and the incorporation of gender perspectives were related to the Agency's mandate and contributed to achieving excellence in all the Agency's functions. Chile therefore highlighted initiatives such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, the Lise Meitner Programme and the regional TC project on strengthening gender equality in national nuclear institutions.

117. Ms MURILLO CENTENO (Nicaragua), underscoring the importance of the General Conference for strengthening cooperation and mutual understanding regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, said that her country appreciated the Agency's efforts to develop and transfer nuclear technology for peaceful applications, improve nuclear safety and security and strengthen nuclear verification worldwide.

118. Cooperation and collaboration between nations was the cornerstone on which international relations were built and maintained. Solidarity among peoples should guide all actions; only through dialogue and multilateral collaboration could a more secure and prosperous world be achieved. Nicaragua therefore underlined the fundamental role of citizens, who — with respect, effort and

perseverance — were the true agents of sustainable development and lasting peace and without whose abiding commitment and actions non-proliferation would be a pipe dream.

119. Nuclear science and technology — as used for peaceful purposes — must be placed at the service of the common good. Nicaragua believed in the transformative power of technology when used for the benefit of humanity and with respect for the environment and the principles of sovereignty, self-determination and equality among nations. The achievements stemming from the Agency's technical cooperation with various countries were testimony to what could be achieved when joint efforts were made to build capacity, innovate, and improve the lives of people. Nuclear energy played a crucial role in that mission.

120. Technical cooperation had had a positive impact on the work of his country's institutions and the well-being of its people. Through its cooperation with the Agency, Nicaragua had strengthened the capacity of its laboratories to monitor outbreaks of animal diseases, improved its early detection capabilities for cardiovascular diseases in women and conducted analyses of contaminants in aquaculture, thereby supporting food security.

121. Throughout 2023, ARCAL had continued to carry out important work that had aligned with Nicaragua's national policy of integration through the promotion and exchange of nuclear knowledge, technology and applications. On the occasion of ARCAL's 40th anniversary, her country called upon the Agency to continue supporting efforts to strengthen regional cooperation.

122. Nicaragua once again condemned, in the strongest terms, the genocide that had been committed against the Palestinian people for more than 72 years. Nicaragua could not remain silent in the face of such atrocities and historic injustices; it therefore reiterated its solidarity with the Palestinian people and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause in international forums and to working towards a peaceful and lasting solution. Calling once more for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, Nicaragua stressed that any action taken must bring relief to the people of the State of Palestine and the Gaza Strip and a complete end to the Israeli occupation.

123. Nicaragua categorically rejected the unilateral coercive measures imposed on nations such as Cuba, Iran, the Russian Federation, Syria and Venezuela, and stood in solidarity with their peoples and governments in the face of desperate actions aimed at undermining progress towards a new multipolar order based on respect for self-determination. Such measures, which sought to promote hatred and confrontation, had failed — and would continue to fail — as they went against the dignity, principles, values and sovereignty of the peoples affected. Not only were they contrary to the principle of self-determination of peoples, but their application reinforced Nicaragua's conviction that the affected nations would continue to mount a resistance and maintain their independence.

124. Iran's cooperation with the Agency was laudable; its continued willingness to maintain a transparent relationship with the Agency had been instrumental in promoting stability and confidence in the region and had served as an example of the power of dialogue and multilateral cooperation. Nicaragua called on the Agency not to allow third parties with neither moral nor political authority to politicize those efforts and encouraged it to continue working hand in hand with the authorities of Iran for the benefit of the Iranian people.

125. Nicaragua appreciated the Agency's work in conflict zones. Given its commitment, as set out in its Basic Law, to the maintenance of peace among peoples and the peaceful resolution of conflicts within the framework of the principles of the UN Charter, her country believed that impartiality and the non-politicization of the Agency's efforts were essential to ensure that its work continued to serve humanity, without outside interference and with respect for the sovereignty of States.

126. Nicaragua called on the General Conference to continue promoting cooperation among peoples and to reject unilateral agendas that sought to undermine the fundamental principles of multilateralism. Common security objectives could be achieved only through mutual respect and collaboration.

127. In conclusion, Nicaragua reiterated its firm commitment to continue participating actively in the Agency's efforts with the aim of guaranteeing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of humanity and future generations.

128. Mr ALFASSAM (Kuwait), praising the visible efforts of the Director General and the Agency's staff to help achieve the Agency's aims, said that 2024 marked the 60th anniversary of his country's membership of the Agency, during which it had achieved many great successes through the responsible use of nuclear technology and had supported the Agency's work in various ways, including by contributing to ReNuAL, the PUI and the LEU Bank. In addition, at the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research had co-hosted an event with the Agency and had provided tours of its research vessel *Al-Mostakshif*. Given the importance of international cooperation for addressing pressing global issues such as climate change and marine pollution, his country hoped to continue building on its cooperation with the Agency in order to achieve even greater national and international success.

129. The Agency's TC programme played a vital role in building national capacities. Over the preceding year, Kuwait had achieved a high level of success in its nine TC projects, conducted in line with its National Development Plan 2020–2025 and covering the fields of genetically modified crop production, fresh water in aquifers, cancer control, and the monitoring of marine microplastic pollution and its impact.

130. Kuwait had three regional Collaborating Centres, covering the areas of medicine, the marine environment and radiation protection, which had been selected by the Agency to assist in its implementation of research programmes and regional and international projects. The Environment and Life Sciences Research Centre at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research had been redesignated a Collaborating Centre for marine radioactive pollution monitoring for the period 2023–2024. His country hoped to develop even greater cooperation with the Agency and new partnerships, especially through Rays of Hope. A delegation from the Kuwait Cancer Control Center had recently visited the Agency with a view to developing radiation therapy services in the country and examining the possibility of becoming a regional anchor centre.

131. His country based its bilateral cooperation in the area of nuclear security on its INSSP, which had proven an effective mechanism for achieving comprehensive progress in that field and which played a major role in guiding national efforts to develop a strong and sustainable nuclear security infrastructure.

132. Kuwait always strove to submit its national reports to the Reviews Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the CNS. In 2024, it had announced its commitment to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, which provided a comprehensive framework of good practices for managing radioactive materials and boosting international cooperation in that area.

133. The work of the Director General and the Agency's experts to ensure the safety and security of all nuclear facilities, especially those in conflict areas, was commendable. All parties must work together to prevent a nuclear disaster and its devastating global repercussions.

134. While affirming the right of all States to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the NPT, Kuwait called on Iran to continue to cooperate with the Agency and to implement the JCPOA in full, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). It looked forward to Iran ratifying and implementing the additional protocol, which would enable the

Agency to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear activities in Iran and its continued status as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

135. Underscoring the Agency's pivotal role in the application of the comprehensive safeguards system, Kuwait underscored the dangers of allowing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Given current global events, the existence of such weapons posed a threat to international peace and security. In that context, his country called on the DPRK to uphold all relevant international treaties and Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the Agency to fully implement its safeguards agreement and resolve all outstanding issues.

136. Kuwait remained committed to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, in line with the Resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. All States in the region were committed to upholding the NPT and their CSAs — with the exception of Israel, the occupying power, which continued to refuse to place all its nuclear facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards and to engage with genuine efforts to establish Agency safeguards and eliminate nuclear weapons and other WMDs across the entire region.

137. Moreover, Israel continued to refuse to implement all relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, including UN General Assembly decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981) calling on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, and General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities. Israel also failed to uphold the Resolution on the Middle East, which had been adopted as part of the deal on the indefinite extension of the NPT — the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime — and would remain in effect until its aims and objectives had been achieved. The international community must shoulder its responsibility to persuade Israel, the occupying power, to accede to and comply with the NPT, and place all its nuclear facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards.

138. The situation in the State of Palestine had escalated to dangerous and unprecedented levels. The Israeli occupying forces' daily attacks had thus far claimed the lives of tens of thousands of defenceless Palestinian civilians, mostly women and children. The recent horrific expansion of those assaults — in utter contempt of international resolutions, international humanitarian law and the orders of the International Court of Justice — was leaving behind a fresh trail of death and destruction.

139. Reaffirming its principled and consistent denunciation of those massacres and the war of genocide waged by the Israeli occupying forces, Kuwait stressed the need for the international community, especially the members of the Security Council, to force Israel to put a stop to its continued violations. The international community must also hold the perpetrators to account and provide protection to the Palestinian people.

140. In closing, Kuwait confirmed its continued support for the Agency's growing role in building capacities to help achieve sustainable development and tackle economic and food crises and in strengthening nuclear safety and security systems in Member States, including through the application of safeguards.

141. Mr IGNATIOU (Cyprus) said that his country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union.

142. Cyprus reaffirmed its support for the Agency's activities in the areas of non-proliferation, the strengthening of the international nuclear safety and security framework, safeguards implementation and the promotion of international cooperation. It also commended the Director General and his team for their work during such challenging times.

143. More than two and a half years had passed since the Russian Federation had initiated its full-scale invasion of Ukraine and unlawfully seized Zaporizhzhya NPP. Such actions constituted clear violations of the UN Charter, international law and the core principles of the Agency's Statute.

144. As a party to all major international treaties and conventions on nuclear safety and security, Cyprus reaffirmed its full commitment to their implementation. It also highly valued the role of the TC programme in enhancing the responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and achieving the SDGs. Over the years, it had gained knowledge and expertise through various projects funded by the TCF. It was currently engaged in three national projects and remained committed to continuing that collaboration in future project cycles.

145. Over the previous year, the Agency had provided his country with experts to build its capacity for the cradle to grave management of sealed radioactive sources, in addition to equipment for the management of disused radioactive sources. With Agency support, the national regulatory body had organized international meetings on safety, and various national organizations had participated in Agency meetings, conferences and international exercises. Cyprus had further broadened its bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries and strengthened its EPR capabilities.

146. Although Cyprus did not operate any nuclear facilities, nor did its future energy plans include the use of nuclear energy, it still recognized the importance of the Agency's standards in ensuring nuclear safety and security worldwide.

147. His country supported all measures and initiatives to strengthen nuclear safety and security and improve the application of safeguards at international level. Acknowledging the significant work carried out by the Agency in that field, Cyprus urged all Member States to ensure the highest levels of safety and security of their nuclear facilities in order to protect their own countries, neighbouring countries and the wider world.

148. Given the transboundary nature of nuclear events, international and regional cooperation was essential for nuclear safety and security. In that regard, from the design stage of nuclear facilities and throughout their entire life cycle, States must provide transparency, public information and consultation with neighbouring countries that might be affected by the release of radiation from nuclear installations.

149. Cyprus strongly supported the Agency's global efforts to maintain safeguards, provide assistance and verification with regard to the release of radioactive material into the environment, ensure the safety and security of nuclear reactors and radioactive materials, especially in areas of unrest, and achieve peace and development.

150. Mr DAPKIUNAS (Belarus) said that the Agency should continue in its role as the main international mechanism for expanding access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy to an ever-larger number of countries. It was important to remember that the Agency's authority and strength lay in the non-politicized nature of its mandate and in its strict observance.

151. One of the key outcomes of the Agency's work was the increased awareness of the contribution of nuclear power and non-power applications to sustainable development. For example, 10% of electricity worldwide was generated by nuclear power and, for the third consecutive year, the Agency had revised upwards its projections of the potential growth of nuclear power.

152. In the context of the outcomes of ICONS 2024, Belarus supported the Agency's central role in coordinating international cooperation in nuclear security. His country was therefore deeply concerned at reports of suspected attacks and provocations against a number of nuclear facilities — including Kursk NPP and Zaporizhzhya NPP — and strongly condemned strikes on energy infrastructure and NPPs. Belarus called on the Agency's leadership to respond swiftly and decisively to situations that posed a threat to nuclear safety at NPPs.



153. Belarus was actively developing its cooperation with the Agency, using the full range of Agency tools. In recent years, the country had hosted all the Agency's key assessment missions recommended to States that were building their first NPP. The missions had proved very useful and the resulting recommendations and proposals had formed the basis of national action plans. The reports from the missions were publicly available on the Agency's website and confirmed the country's readiness for transparent and responsible cooperation.

154. Given the importance of maintaining a constructive expert dialogue on nuclear safety issues, Belarus was open to engaging in such dialogue with all interested parties, including neighbouring countries, and stood ready to provide all necessary information. His country intended to continue making use of the full range of services provided by the Agency in that regard.

155. The TC programme enhanced the effectiveness of staff training for the nuclear power industry, promoted nuclear and radiation safety and contributed significantly to the development of nuclear medicine and the sustainable development of areas affected by the Chernobyl accident. His country therefore looked forward to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, due to be held in November 2024, and hoped that the Conference would become a regular platform for dialogue, supporting States in integrating nuclear science into their national strategies for achieving the SDGs.

156. Belarus was not only a recipient of, but also contributed to, the Agency's advisory and technical assistance. It stood ready to share its experience with the international community, and its experts already regularly participated in technical meetings and webinars.

157. His country's first NPP was now in operation. Consisting of two Generation III+ power units with a total capacity of 2400 MW, the Belarusian NPP was capable of meeting about 40% of the country's domestic electricity needs and would replace the use of up to 5 billion cubic metres of gas annually, thereby significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

158. The experience of Belarus demonstrated the usefulness of the Agency's tools and services — such as Atoms4Food — in supporting countries that were developing nuclear power. Belarus welcomed the focus of the 2024 Scientific Forum on that initiative, which would contribute to expanding the use of nuclear technology in agriculture and ensuring food security. The deterioration of food security globally was caused not only by climate change and global crises but also by the dangerous sanctions policies adopted by several developed States, which prevented a number of goods — including fertilizers from Belarus — from reaching international markets. Given that the use of fertilizers had historically played a key role in increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring food security, a direct consequence of the sanctions on the export of Belarusian potash fertilizers had been a significant decline in crop yields in Africa. His country therefore called for the rejection of the harmful practice of unlawful, unilateral coercive measures.

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

159. Ms AMMAR (Tunisia), praising the Director General for his excellent guidance of the Agency and his valuable efforts to achieve its core goal of 'Atoms for Peace and Development', said that her country remained committed to reinforcing the global nuclear security framework and the principle of non-proliferation. As a founding member of the Agency, Tunisia was convinced that the peaceful, safe and responsible use of nuclear energy and technology was crucial for achieving global peace, security and sustainable development.

160. Member States had a shared responsibility to improve the multilateral nuclear security system by increasing global awareness of evolving threats related to the misuse of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cyberattacks, and to bring their nuclear safety measures into line with

international standards in order to prevent nuclear terrorism and the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials and technologies.

161. Tunisia had recently completed national consultations on a draft framework law for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technologies, which included the establishment of a national nuclear safety authority responsible for all nuclear safety and security activities. The adoption of the draft law would enable Tunisia to proceed with ratifying the additional protocol, in accordance with its commitments.

162. In addition, her Government had submitted a draft law to the parliament regarding the ratification of the Vienna Convention. Tunisia would subsequently adopt the Joint Protocol in order to extend the scope of insurance coverage for potential nuclear accidents.

163. With a view to enhancing its integration into the Agency's global safety system, Tunisia was making the necessary arrangements to declare its commitment to the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources. Furthermore, it was working to improve its radiation safety management system, which would be reflected positively in RASIMS, and to update its INSSP, with a technical advisory mission scheduled to take place in the week following the current session of the General Conference.

164. Her country pursued an integrated approach to cooperation and technical assistance, with a focus on initiatives and programmes that addressed sustainable development challenges. It had therefore joined ZODIAC, focusing at national level on developing vaccines using irradiation techniques in order to prevent diseases that affected farm animals from causing significant economic losses. Together with the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, the National Centre for Nuclear Science and Technology was planning to hold a regional training course on vaccine development using radiation.

165. Furthermore, Tunisia was a participant in NUTEC Plastics — the Agency's most important initiative for addressing the global issue of plastic pollution — and Atoms4Food. Her country was confident that the latter initiative would enhance agricultural crop productivity, especially of cereals, through the proliferation of plant varieties, a reduction in the plant life cycle and increased adaptability to salinity. In addition, Tunisia was currently finalizing the procedures required to join Rays of Hope, which would enhance access to radiotherapy services in the country.

166. Given its limited fossil fuel resources and worsening water scarcity, Tunisia had adopted a desalination strategy for the production of drinking water. Nevertheless, research indicated that such a strategy would require significant investment in the energy sector, which could present challenges with regard to feasibility. Despite focusing on renewable energies, Tunisia would struggle to fulfil its needs and achieve energy self-sufficiency. Aware that the attainment of strategic development goals was no longer feasible without nuclear energy, Tunisia was considering integrating nuclear techniques into its energy mix and using nuclear energy for seawater desalination, and it was eager to promote and establish international cooperation in the field of SMRs. Consequently, as part of the 2026–2027 TC cycle, Tunisia had presented a proposal to evaluate the use of nuclear energy as a source of electricity, including through the use of SMRs, in order to facilitate its transition towards a secure and sustainable energy future.

167. Mr FACETTI (Paraguay) said that his country recognized the important contributions made by nuclear technologies to attaining the SDGs and fostering socioeconomic development, especially in the areas of food safety, human health, animal health and production, environmental protection and conservation, climate change mitigation and water resources management.

168. The TC programme was the cornerstone of horizontal cooperation. For its part, Paraguay had signed a CPF for 2023–2028 and had achieved one of the highest project implementation rates in the region.

169. Paraguay appreciated the donation of a linear accelerator to its National Cancer Institute in 2023, which had strengthened the country's capacity to treat various types of cancer. In addition, it had acquired an irradiator for the Dr Arnaldo Bendlin National Centre for Burns and Reconstructive Surgery. A wholehearted supporter of Rays of Hope, his country welcomed the fact that, as part of that initiative, the National Cancer Institute would soon receive two digital mammography machines. It also highlighted PACT's important role in cancer control.

170. Given the enormous contribution made by the Seibersdorf laboratories, Paraguay was pleased by the Director General's announcement, in March 2024, that resource mobilization for ReNuAL 2 had been completed. In addition, his country welcomed the launch of Atoms4Food and the progress made by the GloWAL Network and looked forward to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in November 2024. Furthermore, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of ARCAL, Paraguay highlighted the progress made by ARCAL members across dozens of projects over the previous year.

171. Paraguay reaffirmed its full support for the Agency's important work to ensure transparency regarding the discharge of ALPS-treated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP. It encouraged the Agency to continue informing Member States of progress in that regard and carrying out comprehensive long term monitoring and evaluation activities.

172. In line with its 2019–2030 National Defence Policy and its 2023–2028 Strategic Security Plan for Development, Paraguay encouraged the Agency to continue its efforts to promote greater adherence to, and full implementation of, legally binding instruments on nuclear security, such as the CPPNM and its Amendment and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

173. Emphasizing the Agency's indispensable role in the face of emerging risks and threats — such as nuclear terrorism, cybersecurity, the protection of sensitive information, nuclear transport safety and insider threats — Paraguay urged it to continue studying artificial intelligence applications in order to address any related challenges and ensure the safe use of artificial intelligence in nuclear technologies. Applauding the organization of ICONS 2024, his country highlighted the significance of the Co-Presidents' statement, with which Paraguay had aligned itself.

174. Emphasizing the importance of moving towards a world without nuclear weapons, Paraguay called for active and constructive participation in the 2026 NPT Review Conference and for the universalization of the CTBT and the TPNW.

175. As the safeguards regime constituted the cornerstone of the NPT, Paraguay appreciated the Agency's verification and monitoring efforts in critical international contexts such as in Iran and Syria. Paraguay urged Iran to rebuild confidence in its nuclear activities through sincere and committed dialogue with the Agency and to take urgent steps to resolve the outstanding issues so that the Agency would be in a position to provide assurances that Iran's nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful.

176. Paraguay renewed its call to the DPRK to take practical steps towards abandoning its nuclear and ballistic programme, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and cooperate promptly with the Agency in the full and effective implementation of its NPT safeguards agreement.

177. The situation in Ukraine highlighted the importance of nuclear safety and security. The efforts of the Agency and its Director General remained instrumental in addressing emerging challenges in that area, especially at Zaporizhzhya NPP. Condemning all action that compromised the safety of nuclear facilities, Paraguay urged the Russian Federation to heed the calls reflected in the resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors and the General Conference.

178. As a peace-loving nation committed to nuclear security, Paraguay reaffirmed its confidence in the Director General's leadership and its commitment to continue working with the Agency and other

Member States to promote the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy. Lastly, Paraguay encouraged the Agency to continue its efforts to guarantee equitable geographical representation, gender equality, women's empowerment and multilingualism.

179. Mr ALJABRI (Oman), praising the work of the Agency and its Director General to strengthen the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, enhance nuclear safety and security and provide technical cooperation, said that his country would continue to work with the Agency and other Member States to achieve the Agency's objectives and enhance its role in service of peace and development.

180. Nuclear science and technology were essential for overcoming the current global challenges. In that context, and as part of its efforts to meet sustainable development needs, Oman had signed its third CPF, covering the period 2024–2029. As part of the first cooperation cycle, his country had launched projects to combat agricultural pests, ensure food safety, enhance radiation medicine practices and improve radiation safety infrastructure. Oman thanked Japan and the Agency for organizing a visit to Japan for five Omani experts to learn about how Japanese institutions implemented viral disease monitoring and surveillance programmes.

181. Sustainable funding was essential for eradicating hunger and malnutrition and ensuring food security. The focus of the 2024 Scientific Forum on improving agriculture reflected the central role that nuclear science and technology played in responding to the growing demand for food and overcoming disruptions in the supply chain. In that context, Oman hoped to join the laudable Atoms4Food initiative, which was helping ensure the sustainability and safety of food production.

182. As responsibility for nuclear security within a State rested entirely with that State, Oman had worked with the Agency, in line with its national and international obligations, in order to draw up an INSSP for 2024–2026 and a strategy for its implementation. It had also participated in ICONS 2024. While consensus had not been reached on a ministerial declaration at the Conference, Oman nonetheless underscored the importance of international cooperation on nuclear security.

183. Oman was striving to develop its legal and regulatory framework and capabilities for all its national and international nuclear activities, in line with its international commitments, especially those set out in its modified SQP, which it was working steadily to bring into effect. Furthermore, in line with its obligations pursuant to the CNS, his country was participating in the working group on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Convention by simplifying its procedures and clarifying its guidance on writing national reports and holding review meetings, with the aim of bringing them into line with the aims and obligations set out in the CNS and to lessen the burden on the Contracting Parties, especially States without existing or planned nuclear facilities. It was hoped that the efforts of the working group would facilitate the universalization of the CNS and, in turn, build global confidence in the safety of nuclear facilities.

184. Mr ZUCA (Mozambique) said that his country reaffirmed its commitment to consolidating the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology through the TC programme. In that regard, Mozambique's third CPF, covering the period 2024–2029, was ready to be signed.

185. Mozambique was particularly grateful to the Agency for its technical cooperation in cancer diagnosis and treatment, given that cancer was the main cause of mortality among people over 60 years of age in the country. It had recently joined the laudable Rays of Hope initiative with the aim of expanding cancer diagnosis and treatment services across the country.

186. Mozambique sought to continue building its capacity in nuclear science and technology, including training, research and development. In addition to its cooperation with the Agency, it collaborated at regional level through AFRA. Furthermore, in order to guarantee a strong regulatory framework for

nuclear safety and security, it made use of the Regulatory Authority Information System and RASIMS and, in 2023, had established a national dosimetry laboratory to reduce occupational radiation exposure. It hoped that its cooperation with the Agency would be extended to include the implementation of a calibration system for radiation monitoring instruments so that the country could carry out operations in accordance with the Basic Safety Standards.

187. His country was party to the CPPNM and its Amendment and was in the process of establishing a national nuclear security committee. With the support of the US Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund, it was also working to improve the safety and security of radioactive sources through the construction of a national bunker for the storage of disused sealed radioactive sources. It remained committed to the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, in particular regarding the establishment of a national policy and strategy for the management of disused sources.

188. His Government had approved the signing of the TPNW; the decision was now awaiting ratification by the parliament. Mozambique was pleased to note the regional efforts to support the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, in particular the initiatives conducted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. For its part, it remained committed to worldwide peace and to global cooperation in the nuclear field within the true spirit of multilateralism.

189. Ms BORG (Malta) said that her country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union, as available online.

190. Malta firmly supported the Agency under the outstanding leadership of the Director General. The Agency's indispensable work anchored all three pillars of the NPT and, in doing so, safeguarded the peace and security so desperately needed by the world. The current session of the General Conference came at a time of global turmoil, with crises emerging on multiple fronts. In such challenging times, the best course of action was to reinforce the rules-based international order, with the UN Charter at its heart. Renewed adherence to commitments and obligations through collective, multilateral action was the only way forward.

191. As a vital instrument in those efforts, the NPT needed to be fully, completely and effectively implemented across all its pillars. Continuing to champion the Treaty's universalization, Malta called on all Member States to reject dangerous nuclear rhetoric and posturing, which served only to deepen division and mistrust, and to instead embrace the confidence-building measures offered by the Agency with a view to enhancing collective security. The NPT should remain the guiding compass when navigating turbulent waters. Malta also renewed its call for all nations to consider joining the TPNW, which presented a clear and practical step towards the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

192. Malta commended the Director General on his recent visit to Ukraine, where nuclear security had become one of the most alarming regional issues following the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion and the unlawful seizure of Zaporizhzhya NPP. Her country expressed its appreciation for the Agency's proactive approach in that regard, its constant and transparent reporting and the vital assistance that it had extended to Ukraine, and voiced its full support for the Five Principles and the Seven Pillars.

193. While the Agency's recent reports regarding Iran were worrisome, Malta welcomed the Agency's efforts to foster engagement and remained optimistic about the possibility of constructive discussions in the near future. The lack of progress in implementing the March 2023 joint statement was nonetheless disquieting; her country called on Iran to address all outstanding safeguards issues and work closely with the Agency to achieve full compliance with its obligations under its CSA.

194. Malta remained gravely concerned at the DPRK's continued development of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes — in direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions — which posed a serious and growing threat to global peace and security. Her country called strongly on the DPRK to return to

full compliance with the NPT, its CSA and the additional protocol and to sign and ratify the CTBT. Malta supported all diplomatic efforts in pursuit of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

195. A proud supporter of the Agency's TC programme, which continued to provide crucial assistance in tackling global challenges such as climate change, human health and food security, Malta was honoured to contribute financially to key initiatives such as Rays of Hope and Atoms4Food. It looked forward to actively participating in the 2024 Scientific Forum, in which its National Ambassador for Organic and Sustainable Food would serve as a panellist. It also eagerly anticipated the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in November 2024, which would highlight the vital role of nuclear science and technology in addressing pressing issues such as health, food security, water management and climate change.

196. As the original proposer of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Malta remained deeply committed to advancing gender equality in the nuclear field. It was encouraged by the Agency's achievement of 48% female representation in the Secretariat and applauded the ongoing efforts of Women in Nuclear IAEA.

197. Given that effective diplomacy depended on the sovereign equality of all Member States, Malta called on all States that had yet to accept the amendment to Article VI of the Statute to consider doing so.

198. The Agency's work highlighted the vital role of international cooperation, as its efforts in the areas of nuclear safety, energy and science not only enhanced global security but also supported sustainable development. It was essential to stand together in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy — not only as a safeguard for security, but also as a means to spur innovation, combat food and water shortages, improve health care and protect heritage.

199. As shared security and prosperity relied on collective determination, Malta was committed to playing an active role in advancing towards a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. In that regard, it called on all Member States to engage constructively with one another, embrace inclusivity and work towards a long term vision of global peace.

200. Mr ILIOPOULOS (Greece) said that his country aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, as published online.

201. Amid the many global crises and challenges faced, it was more crucial than ever to advance rules-based multilateralism, on the basis of international law and the principles of the United Nations, and reinforce international cooperation.

202. Over two and a half years had passed since the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its illegal seizure of Zaporizhzhya NPP. Such actions constituted blatant violations of the UN Charter, international law and the Agency's Statute. During that time, according to the Agency's reports, nuclear safety and security at the plant had steadily worsened. The Russian Federation's intensified attacks on Ukraine's general energy infrastructure had further heightened risks to the safety and security of all nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Greece reiterated its strong condemnation of the Russian Federation's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

203. Greece was grateful to the Agency and the Director General for the critical support that they provided to Ukraine, and commended the Agency's staff for their courageous work in maintaining a continued Agency presence on the ground. As the Director General had stated, nuclear accidents must be avoided at all costs and NPPs must never be attacked; it was therefore essential that the Seven Pillars and the Five Principles were upheld. Greece urged the Russian Federation to completely withdraw all its troops from Ukraine and to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence

within its internationally recognized borders. Greece had endorsed the outcome of the June 2024 Summit on Peace in Ukraine and remained in favour of a just and sustainable peace in that country.

204. Nuclear safety and security incidents recognized no boundaries and could have far-reaching regional — and even global — implications. Collective protection depended on the commitment of all nations to upholding the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. As a party to all the main international nuclear safety conventions, Greece strongly believed that transparency was a vital element in building public confidence in the safety of nuclear energy. It fully supported the Agency's activities to improve nuclear safety worldwide, including through its valuable peer review services. Member States were encouraged to publish the results of peer review missions in the interests of transparency and ongoing improvement, and the Agency was urged to take into consideration Member States' feedback to enhance the quality and responsiveness of future missions.

205. His country followed closely the development of new technologies such as SMRs, which could play a key role in future efforts to achieve carbon neutrality while ensuring the highest standards of nuclear safety. Having endorsed the statement issued by the Co-Presidents of ICONS 2024, it stressed the need for continuous efforts to strengthen global nuclear security.

206. Greece reaffirmed its strong support for the full implementation and universalization of the NPT across its three pillars, and emphasized the importance of implementing robust nuclear safeguards — including the application of the additional protocol — to ensure the peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

207. Iran's accumulation of nuclear material beyond any credible civilian justification was of significant concern to the international community. Greece fully supported the Agency's efforts to resolve the outstanding safeguards issues and improve cooperation with Iran. Given the deeply worrying lack of progress in implementing the March 2023 joint statement, Greece called upon the new Iranian Government to engage with the Agency promptly and substantively and to ensure full compliance with its legal obligations under its CSA.

208. The DPRK's repeated ballistic missile launches and ongoing nuclear programme development posed a serious threat to global peace and security and challenged the international non-proliferation regime. Additionally, its destabilizing actions in the region — and its involvement in armed conflicts in other regions — further exacerbated those challenges. Greece had consistently supported international efforts to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Committed to diplomacy and dialogue, it would continue to work with its partners towards a comprehensive resolution to that complex issue.

209. Greece highly valued the Agency's pivotal role in promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy and advancing development through the TC programme, in particular through the launch of initiatives aimed at addressing global challenges such as climate change and food security. In that regard, it looked forward to participating actively in the 2024 Scientific Forum and in the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme.

210. Commending the Agency's strong commitment to gender equality, Greece encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts toward achieving gender parity and integrating gender considerations across its programmes.

211. Over the past year, Greece had actively collaborated with the Agency in several key areas. An ARTEMIS mission had assessed the country's management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. In addition, Greece had signed a CPF for 2024–2027, which outlined national priorities under the Agency's TC programme, and had donated equipment and services via the Agency as part of its support for Ukraine. Furthermore, at the request of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission — which served as one of the Agency's regional training centres — an Education and Training Appraisal mission had been

conducted to review the national framework for education and training on radiation protection and radiological safety.

212. Expressing its appreciation for the work carried out by the Director General and for the Agency's technical expertise, independence and impartiality in fulfilling its mandate, Greece reiterated its unwavering support for the Agency's central role in ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy and its commitment to maintaining a strong partnership with the Agency.

213. Mr LILLY (New Zealand) said that his country supported the Agency's expanding engagement among the Pacific Island countries and hoped that the trend would continue.

214. Each year, the General Conference presented Member States with an opportunity to reflect and agree on the Agency's priorities with a view to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and safely and securely realizing the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. It was testament to the Agency's work that demand from Member States for the Agency's services, advice and support remained high and, indeed, had continued to grow.

215. It was therefore deeply regrettable that the Russian Federation's war of aggression and illegal invasion of Ukraine had caused such extraordinary risks to nuclear safety and security that the Agency had been forced to divert significant amounts of its attention and resources to addressing the situation. The Russian Federation's war, and its seizure and occupation of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP, had significantly raised the risk of a nuclear accident or incident. New Zealand was deeply concerned that the Five Principles were not being adhered to and that the Seven Pillars had repeatedly been compromised. His country again called on the Russian Federation to cease its occupation of Zaporizhzhya NPP, as had been called for repeatedly in resolutions of the Board of Governors and the General Conference, and to withdraw fully from Ukraine's sovereign territory in compliance with the relevant UN resolutions.

216. New Zealand remained deeply troubled by ongoing threats to nuclear non-proliferation. Iran's enrichment activities — which had no credible civilian purpose — had long posed a mounting nuclear proliferation risk. As a strong advocate of the global non-proliferation regime, New Zealand regretted Iran's continued failure to address outstanding safeguards issues and comply with its legal obligations under its CSA. Iran's unwillingness to resolve those issues meant that the Agency was unable to provide Member States with the necessary assurances that that country's expanding nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful. Iran's disregard for the shared interest in protecting and strengthening the international safeguards system had become a destabilizing factor in the region. Furthermore, at a time of increased regional tension and instability, Iran's failure to implement its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA had resulted in the Agency losing continuity of knowledge regarding Iran's nuclear activities, a fact which would complicate any future nuclear agreements.

217. The world had already seen the damage that a nuclear breakout could cause. The DPRK's possession of nuclear weapons, other WMDs and their delivery systems constituted a clear and grave threat to regional and international peace and security and undermined the global non-proliferation regime. New Zealand again urged the DPRK to refrain from further escalatory actions and return to diplomacy. It was critical that all Member States continued to press the DPRK to take steps in that direction, including by adhering fully to international sanctions. In that respect, the transfer of ballistic missiles from the DPRK to the Russian Federation — which violated UN Security Council resolutions and needed to cease — was gravely worrying.

218. The challenge that such situations posed to the international safeguards system and the Agency's work should not weaken the collective commitment to non-proliferation. The CSA and additional protocol clearly represented the current verification standard. Calling for universal adherence to the



additional protocol, his country urged all States to amend or rescind their outdated SQPs and sign and ratify the additional protocol as a matter of priority.

219. New Zealand, along with many other States, had accepted additional obligations to complement and supplement the non-proliferation regime, including the Rarotonga Treaty — which established the South Pacific's NWFZ — the CTBT and the TPNW. It encouraged all other States to do likewise.

220. While New Zealand had chosen not to pursue nuclear power generation, it recognized nuclear technology's potential role in attaining the SDGs, including in the Pacific region. Nevertheless, it continued to have concerns about the sustainability and risks of nuclear power. All Member States that were developing and using nuclear power must apply the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards throughout all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, including during transport and waste management and in the use of innovative reactor designs such as SMRs and transportable NPPs.

221. As a coastal State located near radioactive material shipping routes, New Zealand strongly supported the advanced notification of such shipments to coastal and other interested States and valued the ongoing dialogue and cooperation between coastal and shipping States on implementing the voluntary best practice guidelines on communication protocols.

222. New Zealand appreciated the Agency's commitment to maintaining a permanent monitoring presence at Fukushima Daiichi NPP for the duration of the ALPS-treated water release and welcomed its role in providing the international community with authoritative reassurance that the release complied with all relevant international safety standards. Given that the release was an issue of significant interest in the Pacific — especially given the region's traumatic nuclear legacy — his country appreciated the sustained efforts of both Japan and the Agency to ensure transparent and open communication with the countries in the region and welcomed their continued commitment to dialogue and information sharing.

223. Reaffirming its support for the work of the Director General and the Agency's staff and the critical role that the Agency played in the multilateral system, New Zealand called on all Member States to lend the Agency their full support and cooperation as it undertook its important work.

224. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates), commending the Director General for his leadership and continued dedication to advancing the Agency's critical work, said that the year 2024 had marked a significant milestone for his country, which had begun the commercial operation of Unit 4 of Barakah NPP. With that achievement, all four units of the plant were now operational, positioning the UAE as the first country in the region to operate a multi-unit plant and enabling it to meet up to 25% of the national electricity demand through clean, reliable and carbon-free nuclear energy. Barakah NPP was a core pillar of the country's commitment to diversifying its energy mix and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Reflective of the UAE's dedication to developing nuclear energy for peaceful uses and its contribution to global climate action, the success of Barakah NPP further demonstrated the importance of international cooperation and adherence to the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation, which had been central to the country's development of its nuclear programme.

225. As the world faced the challenges posed by climate change, nuclear energy was increasingly being recognized as a vital component of the global transition to net zero emissions. Committed to showcasing the role of nuclear energy in mitigating the impacts of climate change and attaining the SDGs, the UAE had hosted the Second International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power 2023 and the 28th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC.

226. The UAE commended the Agency for its unwavering commitment to supporting its Member States in utilizing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including through critical initiatives such as Atoms4Food, Rays of Hope and NUTEC Plastics, which showcased the Agency's focus on

leveraging nuclear technologies to address global challenges. In line with its commitment to nuclear safety, the UAE remained an active participant in the Agency's work in that area. In January 2024, the Agency had officially registered the UAE's capabilities in RANET, thereby making them available to Member States for use in case of emergencies.

227. Given the importance of nuclear security, the UAE had actively participated in ICONS 2024, where it had presented its new regulatory requirements for the physical protection of nuclear material, nuclear facilities and cybersecurity. It was proud of its contributions to regional and global efforts to enhance nuclear security measures and commended the Agency for its pivotal role in addressing emerging nuclear security challenges.

228. The UAE remained fully committed to the Agency's safeguards system, which — strengthened by the additional protocol — formed the bedrock of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It continued to comply fully with its safeguards obligations; in 2024, the Agency had drawn the broader conclusion for the UAE for the second time.

229. As the Agency's safeguards were essential tools in fostering international trust and ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the UAE and the Agency had, in 2023, established a new Member States Support Programme to support the Agency's nuclear verification mission. The UAE had also hosted a regional workshop on Agency safeguards in 2024.

230. The UAE encouraged the universalization of the NPT and urged all States to bring their nuclear programmes under Agency safeguards. It called on States with outstanding safeguards issues to fulfil their obligations and spare no efforts in building confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes, which was critical for maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the global non-proliferation regime.

231. The UAE remained committed to establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, which would significantly enhance regional and global peace, security and stability and reduce the risks of nuclear proliferation. It welcomed the Agency's continued support for efforts that contributed to nuclear non-proliferation in the region.

232. In conclusion, the UAE remained committed to maintaining its strong and enduring partnership with the Agency. As it looked ahead to achieving further milestones, it was confident that the Agency would be able to continue providing the necessary technical support to its Member States.

**The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.**