

# General Conference

**GC(SPL.2)/OR.1**

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## Second special session

# Plenary

## Record of the First Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Monday, 2 December 2019, at 10.10 a.m.*

**President:** Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico)

**Later:** Ms DELGADO PERALTA (Mexico)

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<sup>1</sup> GC(SPL.2)/6.

### **Abbreviations used in this record**

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
COP	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
EU	European Union
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

## — **Opening of the session**

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared the second special session of the General Conference open.
2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, she invited the delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

**All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.**

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that the participation of all delegates in the current session enhanced the Agency's standing as the foremost forum for international cooperation in the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy. The special session had been convened, at the request of the Board of Governors, for the purpose of approving the appointment of the Director General which the Board had made on 30 October 2019, in accordance with Article VII.A of the Agency's Statute.

## **1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee**

4. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that, on the basis of past practice, the Member States that had comprised the General Committee for the 63rd regular session of the General Conference, held in September 2019, had been nominated by their respective area groups to constitute the General Committee of the second special session of the General Conference.
5. She invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.
6. Mr RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group, proposed Ms Delgado Peralta of Mexico.
7. Ms DELGADO PERALTA (Mexico) was elected President by acclamation.
8. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Ms Delgado Peralta on her election and wished her a successful conference.

**Ms Delgado Peralta (Mexico) took the Chair.**

9. The PRESIDENT thanked all delegates, in particular those of Latin America and the Caribbean, for placing their confidence in her to chair the second special session of the General Conference. She said that there could be no occasion more auspicious than the election of a new Director General. It gave all Member States an opportunity to renew their trust in, and support for, the Agency as a key player in international peace, security and disarmament.
10. The occasion was even more significant given the current international context, in which multilateralism was being questioned by some countries and arms races were being resumed, with the abandonment of nuclear disarmament agreements, increasing weapons expenditure, the deployment of new types of weapons and the risk of escalated tensions in the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula and other regions.

11. Mexico, however, continued to strive for strengthened multilateralism as one of the most effective means of addressing major international challenges such as disarmament, poverty eradication, creation of inclusive societies that lived in harmony, peaceful resolution of conflicts based on their underlying causes, and greater integrity, transparency and fairness in the work of international institutions.
12. Her country had long promoted the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Alfonso García Robles, a Mexican diplomat, had been the driving force behind the signing of the Tlatelolco Treaty in 1967, for which he had received the Nobel Peace Prize. With more than five decades of unwavering commitment to that cause, Mexico fully supported the NPT and considered the 2020 NPT Review Conference to be key to making progress in the full implementation and universalization of the Treaty.
13. Through the safeguards agreements signed with its Member States, the Agency was tasked with preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons through early detection of the diversion of nuclear material or the malicious use of nuclear technology. She urged all Member States to continue displaying utmost cooperation and transparency in meeting their commitments under those agreements, which offered the most legitimate way of ensuring the right of all States to the use of nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes.
14. The Agency also helped to prevent the improper use of nuclear technology, facilities, equipment and material and promoted nuclear security. It was important to keep up with constantly evolving technology, including in the field of cybersecurity; the Agency carried out valuable work in that regard.
15. Although each individual State bore responsibility for nuclear safety and security, there should be ongoing efforts to raise safety standards, improve risk assessment for decision-making purposes, and establish contingency plans. However undesired they might be, accidents and malicious acts were going to occur and could have very serious — possibly transboundary — consequences on human health, biodiversity and the environment. Discussions therefore needed to take place on the recovery of damages and compensation. It was hoped that significant progress could be made in that regard during the International Conference on Nuclear Security in February 2020.
16. In line with its ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’ mandate, the Agency contributed directly to the achievement of 9 of the 17 SDGs. It supported many countries that made use of nuclear science and technology to help meet their development objectives in such areas as energy, human health, water resources management, pest control and environmental protection.
17. In the field of health, alarming figures for new cancer cases and mortality rates had been observed in 2018, in particular vis-à-vis breast cancer, for which radiotherapy was recommended in the majority of cases. The Agency should redouble its efforts, together with the WHO, to promote an integrated approach to cancer detection and treatment worldwide, seeking strategic partners in order to obtain more equipment, funding and political support throughout the world for such an important cause.
18. In the context of COP25, which was just beginning in Madrid, she noted that the latest IPCC figures showed that not enough was being done to achieve the climate objectives of reducing carbon emissions by 45% by 2030, achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and stabilizing global warming to 1.5° C by the end of the century. She therefore called on all Member States to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement, renew their efforts and set their sights even higher. Present and future challenges related to climate change necessitated innovative and effective solutions through nuclear science and technology.

19. Support for each of the aforementioned areas could be provided through the Agency's technical cooperation programme. The programme should therefore become stronger, more effective and better funded over the subsequent years.
20. To the Director General Elect, she offered her best wishes and the full support of Mexico in carrying out the Agency's mission. She was certain that, with the backing of Member States, he would bring his own personal touch to the role and renew his team's commitment in order to serve humanity even better.
21. Turning to procedural matters, she said that the Conference was required under Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure to elect 8 Vice-Presidents, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and 5 additional members of the General Committee to constitute the General Committee of 15, which she would chair.
22. She recalled, however, that at the 63rd regular session of the General Conference earlier that year, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole had been from the Far East Group. It had therefore been necessary, pursuant to Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure, to suspend Rules 34 and 40 in order to have 7 Vice-Presidents and 6 additional members, to ensure that the General Committee had 15 members. It was proposed to follow the same practice at the current special session.
23. She proposed that the delegates of Costa Rica, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova and the United States of America be elected as Vice-Presidents, that Ms Rayos Natividad of the Philippines be elected as Chair of the Committee of the Whole, and that the delegates of Angola, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates be elected as additional members of the General Committee.
24. The President's proposals were accepted.
25. She proposed that, in order to make the best use of time, the General Conference suspend Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure until the General Committee had met and submitted its recommendation on the provisional agenda.
26. The President's proposal was accepted.

#### **4. Approval of the appointment of the Director General** (GC(SPL.2)/2)

27. The PRESIDENT said that, pursuant to Article VII.A of the Statute, in October 2019, the Board of Governors had decided to appoint Mr Rafael Grossi to serve as Director General of the Agency for a term of four years, from 3 December 2019 to 2 December 2023, and had requested the General Conference to approve that appointment by adopting the draft resolution contained in document GC(SPL.2)/2.
28. She took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(SPL.2)/2.
29. It was so decided and the Conference confirmed the appointment of Mr Grossi to the post of Director General by acclamation.

**At the invitation of the President, Mr Grossi joined her and the Secretariat on the podium.**

30. The PRESIDENT congratulated Mr Grossi on behalf of the General Conference and wished him a fruitful tenure. She invited him to take the oath of office.
31. Mr GROSSI took the following oath:

“I solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to discharge these functions and to regulate my conduct with the interests of the Agency only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Agency.”
32. Mr GROSSI thanked the General Conference for its support and its faith in him, which was very humbling. Speaking in Spanish, he said that it was particularly significant that the ceremony to inaugurate the first Latin American Director General of the Agency should also take place under the presidency of Mexico. He noted that, earlier in his career, in Geneva he had had the honour to work under Alfonso García Robles, about whom the President had spoken during her opening statement.
33. Reverting to English, he said that the Agency had come a long way since it had been established in 1957. The five Directors General preceding him had all contributed to shaping the organization and making it the indispensable instrument it currently was. He paid tribute and gave thanks to them all.
34. The Agency played an essential role in ensuring that the nuclear material around the world was not misused, through its impartial and accurate system of safeguards inspections. The Agency told it like it was; no other organization could provide credible assurances that nuclear material was not being diverted to make nuclear weapons. As a result, the Agency had built a strong reputation for itself, which would continue to strengthen. The information it reported might not always be popular, but the reporting would continue, since that was the mission entrusted to the Agency when it had first been established.
35. Continuing in French, he said that the Agency’s work went beyond non-proliferation, however. It helped to improve the lives of many people worldwide, who benefited from nuclear techniques in areas such as cancer treatment, water resources management and food irradiation. The demands were enormous, but so were the achievements. Those achievements had continued to be made despite fiscal austerity and budgetary reductions. Such constraints had served only to strengthen the Agency’s determination to seek the means to finance its activities for the benefit of Member States.
36. Reverting to English, he stressed that energy was a key area of work. As written in its Statute, the Agency sought to enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace throughout world. It would continue to work with Member States to that end. Contrary to some predictions, the use of nuclear power was increasing, with 37 new NPPs connected to the grid in the preceding years, over 20 new NPPs under construction and 4 countries in the process of commissioning their first NPP. At the same time, many countries benefiting from nuclear technology and applications did not wish to pursue the nuclear power option, and others were phasing out nuclear power. The Secretariat would step up its efforts to help those States ensure safety and security in their decommissioning and related activities. The Agency was at the service of all its Member States, regardless of their position on nuclear power.
37. Noting that COP25 was currently under way in Madrid, he emphasized that nuclear energy emitted very low levels of greenhouse gases. Contrary to being part of the problem, nuclear energy could be part of the solution. He would shortly attend COP25 to add the Agency’s voice to the debate and contribute to the entire process.
38. The many concerns about nuclear energy and technology could not be ignored. In that connection, the Agency and its safety and security activities had an important role to play. The Agency carried

out truly global work, offering a setting where experts from countries with advanced regulatory structures could share their experiences with those from other countries. The provision of safety standards and guidelines ensured that all nuclear-related activities were carried out for the benefit of society, without putting people in danger. Such work would continue and new challenges would be faced. Nuclear material was a great draw to those wishing to use it for malevolent purposes, such as terrorist activities, but the Agency would continue to provide training, give advice and help governments to cope with growing threats.

39. As the Agency was a large institution with many staff members and a considerable budget, it needed to be managed impeccably, in a transparent and accountable manner. He would therefore work with Member States and follow their guidance to ensure that their taxpayers' money was put to good use.
40. Although women were represented at the Agency, the level of representation was not where it should be. Progress had been made to reach 30% representation in the workforce, but he aimed to achieve true parity, which meant 50%. It would not be easy, but nor was it impossible; other organizations had achieved that objective. Working together, the Secretariat and Member States could ensure that they had all the world's talent at their disposal, rather than just half.
41. Offering a personal reflection, he recalled an occasion over 30 years previously, in a remote location in southern Patagonia, where he had witnessed the then President of Argentina showing a secret uranium enrichment plant to the then President of Brazil. That had been a defining moment in his life: he had learned that, through diplomacy, strict observance of international law, dedication to peace, and a genuine will to do the right thing, situations could be transformed and improved. That had been the case for Argentina and Brazil, along with many other countries, and it could be true for all. A thread connected that moment in Patagonia to the present day. The young diplomat from 30 years previously would now be leading the formidable organization that was the International Atomic Energy Agency and, with the help of the Member States, he would commit all his efforts to that task.
42. Ms FERNÁNDEZ GARCÍA (Argentina), introducing the Bach Consort Wien, which was about to play, said that, since its inception in 1999, the Consort had been one of the most important baroque ensembles in the city of Vienna. The Consort would be directed by one its co-founders, Rubén Dubrovsky, who had been born in Argentina.
43. The programme comprised two pieces by the Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla, who wrote classical music inspired by tango. The first piece was called 'Libertango', incorporating the Spanish word for freedom, and was one of the most widely performed of Piazzolla's opus. It featured a bandoneon — a classical accordion-type instrument played in Argentine tango. The second piece, dedicated to the composer's father, was called 'Adiós Nonino' and included several elements of Piazzolla's earlier compositions.

**The Bach Consort Wien performed its first musical piece.**

44. Mr RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, warmly congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment. The fact that both the President of the General Conference and the newly elected Director General were from Latin America and the Caribbean was testament to that region's commitment to the Agency and its mission.
45. Mr Grossi's knowledge, experience, leadership and diplomatic skills would stand him in good stead in leading the Agency. A seasoned diplomat, he had demonstrated that he had the necessary ability to maximize the Agency's mandate, promoting its role of protecting international peace and security and further strengthening the Agency as the leading international forum for the development and

exchange of scientific and technical cooperation and expertise relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

46. It was important to strengthen the TC programme taking into account the specific requirements of Member States. Under Mr Grossi's leadership, the Agency would have many opportunities to contribute to achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, thus maximizing its internationally recognized credibility and impartiality.
47. GRULAC was proud that, for the first time in its history, the Agency would have a Director General from Latin America and the Caribbean, which would undoubtedly benefit developing countries. In the current context, strong leadership was required to reconcile any differences in opinion that may arise, and GRULAC was certain that, with his skill, charisma and dedication, Mr Grossi would rise to that challenge.
48. The change in Director General marked the onset of a new era for the Agency. Under the leadership of a representative from Latin America, there would be various opportunities to address issues that were integral to that nuclear-weapon-free region. He reaffirmed the group's support for the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT and stressed the importance of adopting further measures to achieve non-proliferation and promote the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.
49. There were major challenges and opportunities facing the Agency, and the work of the new Director General would have a real impact on the lives of many people. Mr Grossi could be assured of the full support and cooperation of GRULAC in executing his mandate. His skills and experience made him worthy of the position of Director General and his appointment had been won through dedication and hard work. Mr Grossi had been an exceptional ambassador and GRULAC was certain that he would generate change that would benefit Member States and the Agency itself. His professional ethics and positive attitude had driven his work to date and would help him to achieve his future goals. GRULAC hoped that his mandate would prove gratifying and would bring the Agency closer to guaranteeing a more secure world where the quality of life was higher. It also wished to highlight the excellent work performed by members of the Permanent Mission of Argentina, which exemplified the commitment and dedication that had allowed Mr Grossi to achieve outstanding results as a representative of his country. GRULAC also thanked the members of the Board for the confidence they had placed in Mr Grossi and in the current session of the General Conference.
50. GRULAC thanked Mr Cornel Feruță for his dedication and contribution to the work of the Agency during his years of service, and in particular his leadership as Acting Director General in recent months, and wished him every success in his personal and professional endeavours.
51. Lastly, GRULAC congratulated the Chair of the Board of Governors for managing the election process in such a manner that had enabled the Conference to appoint the new Director General within the established time frame.
52. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, warmly congratulated Mr Grossi — a member of the Group — on his appointment. The Group thanked the Chair of the Board for the exemplary manner in which she had conducted the process of appointing the new Director General. It also conveyed its gratitude to Mr Feruță for his dedication to the Agency's work since the passing of the late Director General Yukiya Amano, who had led the Agency with great wisdom and exemplary professionalism. The Group wished Mr Feruță success in his future endeavours.

53. He reiterated the Group's long-held view that the Agency's activities should reflect the balance between its three pillars: the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, including TC; safety; and safeguards.
54. The Group acknowledged the Agency's efforts to conduct capacity-building activities in the areas of nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety and emergency preparedness and response, and to strengthen global, regional and national safety networks and forums. The Agency should be fully equipped to assist its Member States, in particular developing countries, in harnessing nuclear technologies to meet multifarious development challenges in the fields of health, agriculture, industry and environmental protection.
55. The Group recognized the unique role that the Agency played in enhancing the capabilities of Member States and stressed that there was a fundamental need to enhance the transfer of nuclear technology and share nuclear knowledge with developing countries. Indeed, the promotion and transfer of nuclear technology for sustainable socioeconomic progress in developing countries was the Agency's main statutory function. The Group also stressed the importance of maintaining an adequate balance between the Agency's promotional and non-promotional activities.
56. The TC programme was the main vehicle for the Agency's statutory function of encouraging and assisting research on, and the development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world. It made an important contribution to sustainable socioeconomic progress in developing countries and to the achievement of the SDGs. The resources available for the TC programme should therefore be sufficient, assured and predictable, to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute, and should be increased taking into account the indicative planning figures, the increasing number of Member States with a national TC programme and evolution in the level of the Regular Budget.
57. The Group emphasized its commitment to gender mainstreaming and geographical distribution as guiding principles for international organizations. It continued to follow up substantive aspects of gender mainstreaming in the Agency in the most effective and efficient manner.
58. The Group was convinced that Mr Grossi's leadership, experience and knowledge had prepared him to lead the Agency in an inclusive, impartial, effective and professional manner that would enhance the work of the Agency to meet growing challenges, taking into account in particular the needs of developing countries in relation to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group assured the new Director General of its full support and cooperation.
59. Ms KRUGER (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Mr Grossi's experience and stature gave her group assurance that there were positive times ahead for the Agency and that the priority areas set out in Article II of the statute would receive appropriate attention.
60. Following the death of the late Director General Amano, Mr Feruță had led the Agency with professionalism and dedication. The Group thanked him and wished him success in his future endeavours. It paid tribute to the late Director General's hard work and leadership and extended its condolences once again to the Government and people of Japan. The Group also thanked the Chair of the Board for the exemplary manner in which she had led the Board and conducted a challenging election process.
61. The Group assured the new Director General of its full support in all areas of the Agency's work. She emphasized the importance her Group attached to the TC programme, which was of particular interest to developing countries joining the Agency and enjoyed the full support of the African Group. The programme was the main vehicle through which the Agency fulfilled its mandate to promote and facilitate the peaceful use of nuclear technology among Member States. The Group

encouraged Mr Grossi to implement his vision of expanding the programme taking into account new realities, challenges and opportunities, and was confident of his abilities in that regard.

62. The resources available for the TC programme should be sufficient, assured and predictable, to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute and help Member States to meet the SDGs. The regular budget and TCF proposals should continue to reflect that imperative and ensure a balance between promotional and non-promotional activities. The Group would support every effort to increase resource mobilization, provided that such efforts were additional to, and not a replacement for, traditional funding and budget mechanisms.
63. More than 60 years after its establishment, the Agency was entering a new era that was defined by a number of challenges: climate change; a growing global population; the cancer burden, especially in low- and middle-income countries; a high demand for energy; an increased number of operational nuclear power plants and research reactors; and the need to replace nuclear scientists and experts who were approaching retirement, especially in developing countries. Mr Grossi could be assured of the Group's full support as he led the Secretariat in assisting Member States and the international community in tackling those issues.
64. Ms HÄMÄLÄINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and San Marino aligned themselves with her statement.
65. The EU warmly congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment as Director General and welcomed the fact that a representative from Latin America would be occupying that position for the first time. The EU looked forward to working with Mr Grossi and wished him every success in his future role. He could be assured of the EU's steadfast support. Mr Grossi had extensive experience in the field of non-proliferation, as reflected by his designation as President of the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Furthermore, his experience as Argentine Ambassador to the Agency and his previous roles within the Agency would undoubtedly serve him well in his new position.
66. The EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to the important work of the Agency in all areas of its mandate, and looked forward to intensifying its cooperation with the Agency under the leadership of the new Director General. The EU welcomed Mr Grossi's strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for women at the Agency and further improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's work. It looked forward to the implementation of those commitments.
67. Lastly, the EU commended the Chair of the Board and her team on their excellent stewardship in guiding the Board through a complex election process in a timely and transparent manner.
68. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, conveyed the Group's appreciation to Mr Cornel Feruță for his outstanding professionalism in steering the work of the Agency as Acting Director General. Accordingly, the Agency had been able to continue to fulfil its mandate, following the passing of the late Director General Amano.
69. The Group congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment and expressed its confidence that he would spare no effort in leading the Agency with professionalism and impartiality on the basis of his vast experience in disarmament and non-proliferation, striking the necessary balance between the Agency's programmes and meeting the needs of Member States in all areas of the Agency's work.
70. The Group looked forward to cooperating with Mr Grossi to achieve the Agency's objectives and establish international peace and security, in particular in the Middle East. It hoped that the Agency would play a greater role in accordance with its mandate to ensure the implementation of the annual resolution adopted by the General Conference on the application of safeguards in the Middle East

and with regard to developments relating to the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

71. The Group would lend the new Director General all the support he needed in the performance of his statutory duties, in order to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy.
72. Mr ISRAFILOV (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of NAM, warmly congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment and wished him every success in his new position. NAM thanked the Chair of the Board and congratulated her on her able leadership and consistent efforts to conclude the election process in a timely manner and in line with the mandate issued by the Board. It also extended its gratitude to Mr Feruță for his skilful management of the Agency since the passing of the late Director General Amano and wished him well in his future endeavours.
73. NAM supported the central role of the Agency in developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy and transferring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to its Member States. He recalled the position expressed in that regard in the outcome documents adopted by the NAM Summits of Heads of State and Government, including the Baku outcome document, in which NAM had: expressed its full confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the Agency and emphasized that the Agency was the sole intergovernmental organization within UN system with the mandate and expertise to deal with the technical subjects of nuclear safety and security; stressed the need for the further development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes in developing countries, contributing to the attainment of their respective national sustainable development goals; expressed its deep concern over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons; and reaffirmed its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remained its highest priority.
74. NAM once again expressed its full confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the Agency under the leadership of Mr Grossi and looked forward to substantive cooperation, including through the TC programme.
75. Ms SRISWASDI (Thailand), speaking on behalf of ASEAN, warmly welcomed the appointment of Mr Grossi as Director General and wished him all the best in fulfilling his new mandate. ASEAN was confident that his professionalism and strong leadership would boost the Agency's significant contribution to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, among other things by bolstering technical cooperation and broadening the scope of capacity building.
76. ASEAN conveyed its appreciation to the Chair of the Board for her efficient organization of the election process. It paid tribute to the achievements of the late Director General Amano, in particular his policy of Atoms for Peace and Development, which benefited all Member States and notably developing countries. ASEAN also thanked Mr Feruță for having exercised his duty during a challenging transitional period in a professional and effective manner, and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.
77. The recent conclusion of Practical Arrangements between ASEAN and the Agency on cooperation in the areas of nuclear science and technology applications and nuclear safety, security and safeguards, held on the margins of the recent General Conference, represented a significant milestone. The Practical Arrangements were expected to serve as the overall framework for future collaboration between the two organizations and to provide a foundation for ASEAN to expand work on existing and future projects in Southeast Asia. ASEAN looked forward to working closely with the new Director General to implement that instrument in a concrete and effective manner and to further strengthen cooperation in the region and beyond.
78. Mr D'HOOP (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the Western European Group, extended the Group's congratulations to Mr Grossi, who was assuming the position of Director General at a challenging

time. The Group wished him well in his crucially important work and assured him of its full support. It was entirely fitting that Mr Grossi was the first Director General from Latin America and the Caribbean, since the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco had established the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. A highly experienced diplomat, acknowledged expert in the nuclear field and accomplished public speaker, Mr Grossi was eminently qualified for the position. He had demonstrated his boundless energy and commitment, both as Ambassador of Argentina to the Agency and as President-designate of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, and was the only person to have chaired the Nuclear Suppliers Group for two consecutive years. The Group welcomed his strong commitment to gender mainstreaming, effectiveness and efficiency within the Secretariat, multilingualism, and transparency vis-à-vis the Board and Member States.

79. In closing, the Group congratulated the Chair of the Board and her team for managing the complex transition process in a timely, effective and transparent manner.
80. Mr SOLANO ORTIZ (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Spanish Language, welcomed the fact that the Agency had appointed its first Spanish-speaking Director General. It was a happy coincidence that Mr Grossi had been sworn in by a Spanish-speaking President, allowing the ceremony to be conducted for the first time mostly in a language other than English. That was a source of pride for the Group, since it highlighted the relevance of the Spanish language within the Agency and the importance of multilingualism as a tool for the promotion of universal values, which would undoubtedly be enhanced under the new Director General.
81. The Group was confident that, under the leadership of Mr Grossi, all of the official UN languages would be put to use in view of the importance of disseminating the Agency's significant body of information relating to all areas of its work. It was essential that such information should reach as many people as possible, including those in Spanish-speaking countries, in order to enhance its impact on the international community and public opinion around the world.
82. The Group congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment and thanked the President for presiding in such an efficient manner over the current session.
83. Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear as a co-chair, said that achieving gender equality through women's empowerment was a crucial management objective that could support and advance the Agency's implementation of its mandate to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. The Group was therefore encouraged by the emphasis placed on gender equality and gender mainstreaming throughout the process to elect a new Director General, which had included for the first time a female candidate for the post.
84. The Group warmly congratulated Mr Grossi on his appointment and looked forward to working with him. It was encouraged by his pledge that women would enjoy equal opportunities at the Agency and his acknowledgement that further efforts would be needed to reach equality within the Secretariat. The Group stood ready to assist Mr Grossi in accelerating efforts to achieve gender equality across all of the Agency's functional areas of work and professional employment categories, and mainstreaming gender in its programmes and activities.
85. The CHAIR paid tribute to the leadership demonstrated by Ms Buenrostro Massieu as a female diplomat within the Agency.
86. She invited the Bach Consort Wien, directed by Mr Rubén Dubrovsky, to perform a second musical piece for the Conference.

**The Bach Consort Wien performed its second musical piece.**

87. The CHAIR thanked the members of the Bach Consort Wien for having performed at such a special occasion for the Agency.

**The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.**