



International Atomic Energy Agency

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

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## NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION: 22–26 SEPTEMBER 1975

RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Neue Hofburg, Vienna, on Monday, 22 September 1975, at 3.15 p. m.

Temporary President: Mr. MEDINA (Philippines)

President: Mr. FELICKI (Poland)

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\* A provisional version of this document was issued on 25 September 1975.

\*\* GC(XIX)/542.

## THE RECORD

### OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared the nineteenth regular session of the General Conference open.

2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure he 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 welcomed those present, particularly Mr. Veselsky, Secretary of State in the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, who was honouring the opening meeting of the session with his presence.

4. He, (the Temporary President), was very happy to return to Vienna, where he had spent a number of years as a member of the Agency's staff. During that time he had participated in the Secretariat's work of providing technical assistance to the developing Members of the Agency; now, as a retiring President of the Conference who happened to be the delegate of such a Member, he was in a position to put on record how greatly those Members appreciated the technical assistance they received from the Agency. In view of the current economic situation it was understandably difficult for the Agency to provide all the help that was so badly needed. It was nevertheless doing its best, as could be seen from the fact that to meet the developing countries' need for training in the installation and use of nuclear power equipment it had, within the space of six months, established and started to implement a detailed programme of courses on the planning and implementation of nuclear power projects. In the critical period through which the world was at present passing the Agency was thus succeeding fairly well in carrying out its statutory functions.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.

6. Mr. PETRI (Sweden) nominated Mr. Felicki, the delegate of Poland. Mr. Felicki had been Chairman of the Polish Atomic Energy Commission since 1973. Graduating from the Technical University of Warsaw in 1952, he had since then been a member of the teaching staff of that establishment. For some years he had been Counsellor to the Secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in Moscow and, as such, had participated in the co-ordination of research and study programmes. In addition, Mr. Felicki was the author of many scientific publications, relating in particular to the theory

of information and its applications, the technology of automatic control and the organization of research.

7. Mr. OSZTROVSZKI (Hungary) and Mr. SIRRY (Egypt) supported the nomination.

● 8. Mr. Felicki (Poland) was elected President of the General Conference for its nineteenth regular session by acclamation.

● Mr. Felicki (Poland) took the Chair.

9. The PRESIDENT thanked the delegates for the confidence they had shown in him in unani- mously electing him to that important office. He saw his election as a tribute to his country which, in co-operation with the socialist States and all peace-loving countries, was trying to develop the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. He appealed to all delegates to lend him their support in striving for the success of the session which had just opened.

10. He recalled that, under Rule 34 of the Rules of Procedure, he had to propose to the General Conference for election, the names of eight Vice- Presidents and the name of a Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. In accordance with Rule 40, he had also to propose for election five additional members of the General Committee. All those elected would hold office until the close of the session.

11. He accordingly proposed that the delegates of the following States should be elected as the eight Vice-Presidents of the General Conference: Brazil, the Federal Republic of Germany, Iran, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zambia. He proposed Miss P. G. Lim (Malaysia) as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. Lastly, as additional members of the General Committee, he proposed Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, India and Venezuela.

● 12. The General Conference accepted the President's proposals.

● 13. The PRESIDENT declared the General Committee duly appointed in compliance with Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure.

### APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE AGENCY (GC(XIX)/543, 552 and 553)

● 14. The Conference adopted the draft resolution in document GC(XIX)/543 approving the United Republic of Tanzania for membership of the Agency.

● 15. The Conference adopted the draft resolution in document GC(XIX)/552 approving the United Arab Emirates for membership of the Agency.

● 16. The Conference adopted the draft resolution in document GC(XIX)/553 approving Qatar for membership of the Agency.

17. Mr. AL KHATER (Qatar) thanked the delegates for unanimously supporting his country's application for membership of the Agency. Qatar would do everything in its power to discharge its obligations under the Agency's Statute.

18. Mr. VITTA (United Republic of Tanzania) expressed his gratitude to the delegates who had unanimously approved his country's membership of the Agency. In solemnly undertaking to discharge its functions as a Member of the Agency to the best of its ability, his country was not without hope of gaining benefits from membership. Since its economy was basically rural, Tanzania placed stress on the development of its agriculture and was therefore particularly interested in the agricultural applications of nuclear science and technology. Furthermore, it also hoped to receive assistance from the Agency in geological prospecting and in the study of its water resources. Lastly, Tanzania took a keen interest in the medicinal applications of nuclear science and the university medical department had already embarked on research in the applications of radioisotopes for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

19. Tanzania had no plans for the construction of nuclear power stations in the near future, but it intended to keep abreast of the progress made in that field in countries with socio-economic conditions comparable with its own.

20. Mr. ALMAZROI (United Arab Emirates) thanked the delegates for having approved his country's membership of the Agency, together with that of Qatar and Tanzania.

#### STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

21. The DIRECTOR GENERAL recalled that nuclear energy was coming of age, with the present year marking the twentieth anniversary of the first Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy which opened at Geneva on 8 August 1955. That Conference had led to the fulfilment of the desire of President Eisenhower that all countries of the world should be able to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the medium of an international organization - the organization subsequently to become the International Atomic Energy Agency.

22. For some years the attitude of the public to nuclear power has been marked by a great deal of controversy, and the problem now had to be seen in the light of the more general debate that had grown up about the quality of life. The Agency had sought to provide all those involved in the debate with a forum and to supply them with factual information.

23. With regard to the availability of and demand for energy, the intensive surveys that were being conducted in many industrialized countries had still not led to any definite conclusions. There was a consensus, however, that the demand for energy would continue to increase. All countries would need energy in increasing quantity in order

to preserve or improve their standard of living and would be compelled to resort more and more to raw materials of poorer quality or recycled scrap material. Not even the savings achieved by using procedures that consumed less energy, or the increased efficiency of the thermodynamic cycle and the use of low-grade heat, would avail to maintain supply at the same level as demand.

24. As far as energy resources were concerned, estimates remained inconclusive. It was clear that the optimistic statements made regarding the future use of fusion, solar, geothermal or wind power would have to be thoroughly revised both because of the extensive development work still needed and because of inaccurate estimates of the potential energy available, especially in the case of wind power. Fossil fuel was still by far the most important source of energy for immediate use. But it was still not known for sure to what extent the combustion products from fossil fuels influenced the environment and a great deal more research in that area would need to be done before the permissible limits could be established.

25. The surveys to which he had referred all concluded that nuclear energy was the only alternative to fossil fuel in the immediate future. At the present time it was thought that, within ten years, it would account for 20% of the total electrical energy produced in the world. Installed nuclear capacity was now about 85 000 MW(e), distributed among 19 countries. The requirements of most of the developing countries had now emerged fairly clearly and gave an idea of the demands that would be placed upon the Agency over the next few years.

26. Uranium reserves available at less than \$30/lb were limited to some 3, 5 million tons, and since a 1000 MW(e) thermal reactor used up about 5000 tons of uranium during a lifetime of 30 years, it could easily be seen that the present known resources would supply only 700 reactors. It was clearly necessary, therefore, to introduce the use of breeder reactors on a large scale if the era of fission energy was not to end fairly soon. Considerations of that kind had in fact led the Agency to support uranium prospecting operations in 20 countries, including five large United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects.

27. The public debate on broad utilization of nuclear power was focused on three main issues: the risks associated with reactor accidents and the reliability of nuclear reactors; the disposal of radioactive waste; and the safeguarding of nuclear materials, mainly plutonium, to prevent their diversion for military or terrorist activities.

28. During the past year the Agency had intensified its efforts in those three areas. The risks of potential accidents had been examined by Professor Rasmussen in a well-known report, and the Agency was at present engaged, in collaboration with the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), in analysing public reaction to the various technological risks to which modern

society was exposed. Furthermore, IIASA was planning to undertake a methodological comparison, with the assistance of the Agency and the World Health Organization (WHO), of all available and future energy options. That study, for which IIASA was hoping to receive assistance from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), would make possible a quantitative evaluation of the effects of the production and use of energy on the environment. The Agency, in turn, was working with UNEP on a more general comparison of the detrimental effects on the environment of various systems of energy production. Finally, the Agency had been invited by UNEP to take part, next February or March, in a panel specifically devoted to the impact of nuclear energy on the environment. It intended to bring to UNEP's attention the projects to which he had referred, and would stress that the consequences of nuclear energy for the environment must not be considered in isolation but compared with those of other energy options, so that Member States could more easily select the strategy best suited to them.

29. Within that context he recalled the conclusions of the Symposium on Reliability of Nuclear Power Plants, held by the Agency at Innsbruck early in the spring. Impressive progress had been made in eliminating the "teething troubles" of nuclear power stations in the 400-600 MW(e) and 1000 MW(e) range, and very good results had been obtained even with very large units. It was no longer true to say that nuclear power stations were not safe. Under the programme approved in 1974 for the publication of a comprehensive system of internationally acceptable safety codes and guides for nuclear power plants, the Agency was in the process of preparing five codes dealing with the structure of governmental organizations and the siting, design, operation and quality assurance of nuclear plants, as well as 20 safety guides. That documentation would be of special value to Member States just embarking on nuclear power programmes.

30. Whereas most aspects of nuclear power production had now reached the normal industrial stage, certain parts of the nuclear fuel cycle, such as fuel reprocessing and radioactive waste management had not. The Agency thus had work to do in that area, and had accordingly undertaken a thorough study of regional fuel cycle centres. Assistance from Member States was essential for that purpose, and the Agency had furthermore requested financial aid from UNEP.

31. The production of nuclear power, and the process of securing public acceptance of it, were bound up with the major problem of waste management. Releases of radioactive material into the environment, on land or at sea, required careful international planning and co-operation. The Agency had organized meetings of experts and secured their assistance in defining priorities and objectives, and immediate attention was being given to questions such as dumping at sea, wastes from uranium milling, and the handling of irradiated fuel at nuclear power plants - a growing problem because of inadequate reprocessing

capacity. The Agency was also considering how to design nuclear power plants for easy decommissioning, and planned later to study ways of separating and storing the radionuclides now being released into the atmosphere.

32. In addition, the Agency was establishing an advisory group to study the disposal, after solidification, of highly radioactive and alpha-emitting wastes in stable geological formations, an operation which in principle was being more and more widely accepted. It was worth recalling in that connection that the Agency symposium held in Gabon in June had reached the conclusion that the plutonium formed and deposited in the Oklo natural reactor, approximately 1700 million years before, had never moved from the site of formation, having disintegrated on the spot.

33. Turning to the question of safeguards and the physical protection of nuclear materials, he said that the Agency's safeguards were currently being applied to about six tons of plutonium, a quantity which was expected to increase to some 200 tons by the beginning of the 1980s. The application of safeguards depended to a large extent on the full co-operation of the countries concerned. The physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials had recently attracted considerable public attention. The question had been reviewed by a group of experts which had met in Vienna in May and which had revised the book of recommendations to Member States on the subject. A suggestion had been made that an international convention should be elaborated covering in particular the physical protection of international transfers of nuclear materials. The Agency was ready to co-ordinate that work if Member States accepted the suggestion.

34. A major international conference on nuclear power and its fuel cycle would be held in Salzburg from 2 to 13 May 1977. At the present stage of introduction of nuclear power into electric grids the Agency considered it desirable for that conference to concentrate on the nuclear fuel cycle and the need for integration of its individual stages, the safety of nuclear facilities and the management of radioactivity, and constraints on the development of nuclear power in developing countries.

35. The Agency would exclude from its programme of scientific meetings for 1976 all subjects which would be covered by that conference. Measures were also being taken to avoid duplication of subject matter between the Agency's conference and the 10th World Energy Conference to be held in Istanbul in September 1977. Relations between the Agency and the World Energy Conference had been strengthened since one of the latter's Commissions had been located at the Agency's headquarters.

36. In its final declaration the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons (NPT Review Conference)[1] had approved the measures taken by the Agency to carry out its tasks under NPT, and had expressed its strong support for the Agency's application of effective safeguards.

37. As far as "internal" measures were concerned he said he had requested a group of experts to study the organization of the Department of Safeguards and Inspection. The group had made recommendations, some of which had already been implemented; in particular, a task force had been set up to accelerate the automatic data-processing system. The improvements achieved had already made it possible to bring into operation the computerized system of processing, storage and retrieval of data submitted by the national safeguards systems of several States party to NPT. By January 1976 all States party to NPT would be included in the operation. The documents describing the inspection procedures to be applied to various facilities had been completed. The part dealing with methods and techniques had already been published. A group was preparing the first edition of the other five volumes of the Safeguards Technical Manual which should be completed within six months.

38. The Safeguards Analytical Laboratory at Seibersdorf should be able to commence operations in the near future. It would enable the Agency to analyse much more rapidly the samples requested by inspectors. A standing advisory group on safeguards implementation had been set up to answer any requests for technical advice submitted by Member States, the Board of Governors or the Director General.

39. Further rationalization of the activities of the Department of Safeguards and Inspection would follow as a result of interdepartmental collaboration. For instance, automatic processing of safeguards data was performed in the Division of Scientific and Technical Information, the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory was becoming the responsibility of the Division of Research and Laboratories and physical protection work was being undertaken by the Legal Division and the Division of Nuclear Safety and Environmental Protection. In order to satisfy repeated requests from delegates, a training seminar would be held in Vienna at the beginning of December to train staff from national systems of accountancy and control of nuclear materials in the preparation of the Agency's input data.

40. The external group of problems included the incongruity between the application of safeguards under the Agency's Safeguards System (1965, as Provisionally Extended in 1966 and 1968)[2] and

the material recommended by the Board for use as a basis for negotiating safeguards agreements which was reproduced in the booklet entitled The Structure and Content of Agreements between the Agency and States Required in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[3], i. e. the documents prescribing the old kind of safeguards and those exercised in connection with NPT. As he had said before, there could never be a satisfactory safeguards system until the suppliers of nuclear equipment and materials made it a condition of delivery that all nuclear activities in the recipient countries should be placed under Agency safeguards. The recommendations of the NPT Review Conference were a move in that direction and were to be welcomed as they recognized the existence of a problem which had to be solved for NPT to succeed. Unfortunately those recommendations did not go far enough and the NPT Review Conference might have aggravated a situation where commercial interests might prevail over long-term political goals.

41. It was essential that the Agency's safeguards should be applied to all nuclear activities in the non-nuclear-weapon States. In the past the spread of nuclear explosive capacity had perhaps been correlated too exclusively with the growth of the use of nuclear power. If that capacity spread still further, it would almost certainly be as a result of nuclear materials, plants or know-how being imported without full fuel cycle safeguards. A lot of ground had been covered since safeguards had first been applied by the Agency to a small research reactor in Japan in 1961 but the gaps which still existed could only be closed by further acceptances of NPT or by commitments to accept full fuel cycle safeguards. In other words, the aim must be to achieve the universal application of effective safeguards in all the non-nuclear-weapon States. A step in the right direction had been taken recently when safeguards had been extended to cover the consequences of the transfer of technological information and know-how.

42. It was anticipated that regional fuel-processing facilities, operated by the States concerned or on an international basis, could make a major contribution to international security. Indeed, such an approach would minimize the number of plants at which plutonium became available, ensure that effective international safeguards were applied to plutonium separation and storage facilities and reduce the risk of dangerous nuclear material falling into unauthorized hands. The NPT Review Conference had recognized the soundness of that concept and had urged all parties to NPT to co-operate in the study being undertaken by the Agency. Means should be explored of placing existing fuel cycle facilities and those being ordered under regional or international control. After all, the first significant civil reprocessing facility in Europe was the result of a regional initiative.

[1] Held at Geneva from 5 to 30 May 1975. The text of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is reproduced in document INFCIRC/140.

[2] INFCIRC/66/Rev. 2.

[3] INFCIRC/153/(Corrected).

43. The nuclear-weapon States had a particularly important part to play in preventing proliferation. They were the major exporters. They could help to prove that international safeguards did not hamper industry. Further progress towards a complete ban on nuclear tests would be an encouragement for all who supported the cause of non-proliferation and would weaken the arguments of those who insisted that nuclear weapons were imperative for national security.

44. In view of the current political situation, the NPT Review Conference had achieved what could realistically be expected, and the next such conference would probably be able to present a more reassuring image to the world. It was to be hoped that in the meantime the concept of a universal solution to the problems of preventing proliferation and the practical steps required for that purpose would have been adopted by all concerned, especially the nuclear-weapon States; a precedent would thereby be set for the more important discussions relating to nuclear and conventional disarmament.

45. The NPT Review Conference had shown that international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had made considerable progress and it had thus given the Agency's programmes additional impetus. But the problem of limiting and controlling nuclear weapons still remained. To ask non-nuclear-weapon States to refrain from manufacturing them assumed a degree of confidence in international order and security that had by no means been achieved as yet. Some of them had left the conference with a feeling of frustration, wondering whether giving up the nuclear option made any sense in the present state of affairs. In those circumstances it was to be hoped that the discussions on a total nuclear test ban would produce specific results.

46. Nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes (PNE) had become a symbol of the dilemma created by the atom. All countries should be able to benefit from any future benefits of that technology. One solution would be to place all explosions under an international regime; that could be one of the provisions of a complete test ban applying to all countries. At present the international community was looking to the Agency both for an objective international evaluation of PNE technology and for services connected with its international transfer and control. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, set up by the Board of Governors and due to meet for the first time during the following week, would provide a framework for detailed consideration of those issues.

47. In its technical assistance programmes the Agency continued to place increasing emphasis on the introduction of nuclear power and the application of nuclear technology, as was reflected by the series of courses on nuclear power project planning and implementation that it was organizing, the first of which had started at Karlsruhe in the Federal Republic of Germany earlier in September. Other courses would follow in 1976 at Argonne in

the United States, and at Saclay in France. There could be no doubt that the courses would contribute to the development of legal and institutional infrastructures bearing responsibility, in the developing countries, for the planning and implementation of nuclear power programmes.

48. The target for voluntary contributions to the General Fund, which was used to provide technical assistance, had been \$2 million for 1966[4] and some Member States were proposing that it should be \$5.5 million for 1976. UNDP funds had tripled in five years, and 19 large-scale UNDP projects were under way, as against 15 a year before. Assuming that that rate of expansion continued, it might be advisable to review the present management of technical assistance. The "Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency"[5] should be brought up to date in the light of the realities of today and probable future developments.

49. Important developments were taking place in the Agency's International Nuclear Information System (INIS), which had now been in operation for six years. They would turn INIS into the main international abstracting service for the nuclear sciences, enabling it to replace, in due course, Nuclear Science Abstracts, which, since its first publication by the United States Atomic Energy Commission in July 1947, had rendered such indispensable services to the nuclear community. It was noteworthy that 32 of the 46 participating States, including developing countries, were now receiving INIS output on magnetic tape.

50. It had to be recognized that for a large number of Member States the chief interest of nuclear energy still lay in its applications in medicine, agricultural research and the development of water resources. In that area, regional co-operation, particularly in Asia, had mainly related to the use of irradiation for food preservation. He therefore urged Member States and sister agencies of the United Nations system, in particular WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to take the action needed to obtain a final decision on the international clearance for irradiation of certain major foodstuffs. That matter had been pending since 1970 and needed to be settled, given the world food shortage.

51. He went on to mention some of the activities under the programme of the Department of Research and Isotopes, in particular those relating to fusion reactors, actinides and pollution. The International Laboratory of Marine Radioactivity in Monaco was undertaking complementary research on non-radioactive pollutants, for example heavy metals and chlorinated organic compounds such as DDT.

52. The International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, operated jointly since 1970 by

[4] See Resolution GC(IX)/RES/193, para. 1.

[5] Annexed to Resolution GC(IV)/RES/65.

the Agency and UNESCO, had been the object of a review in November 1974 by a group of scientists. The conclusions which the two organizations drew from the group's report would be included in the Agency's next six-year programme. It might therefore suffice simply to mention that the group had strongly advocated stabilization of the Centre's budget, which was at present largely made up of contributions from UNDP, the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), the Ford Foundation, etc.

53. An International Civil Service Commission had been appointed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1974. The Commission would meet at least once a year in Europe and he had invited it to hold an early meeting in Vienna. He would stress that the remuneration conditions of international civil servants required to be revised. That was necessary in order to make them commensurate with what was now considered appropriate, for example, in commercial undertakings for a large number of personnel serving outside their home countries. The many recent instances of unrest among international civil servants clearly showed that urgent action was needed.

54. It should also be noted that, following the United Nations Conference on the International Women's Year, the Agency had revised its staff rules and regulations so as to eliminate any discrimination vis-à-vis female staff members.

55. The Conference was now conducting its work in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as they had been amended in 1974[6]. That would contribute to a simpler and more efficient dispatch of its business and would enable it to concentrate more on matters of substance.

56. In response to suggestions by several delegations, the Agency's annual report would in future cover the calendar year, thus simplifying the task of Member States wishing to see how far the programme for the year in question had been carried out.

57. Before concluding, he wished to announce that the Agency's permanent headquarters would be ready by the end of June 1978 and that full arrangements had been made for the most rational use of the office space and facilities which the Austrian Government was building. Plans were being drawn up concerning the financial commitments that the move would entail, and they would be circulated to the Board before the end of the year.

58. He wished to pay tribute to the host city and country for their unique generosity in relation to the Agency's permanent headquarters and many other matters, including the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory.

59. Finally, he congratulated Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the United Republic of Tanzania

on the fact that the Conference had unanimously approved them for membership of the Agency.

60. Mr. WINSPEARE GUICCIARDI (Under-Secretary-General, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva) said he would like to congratulate the President on his election and to convey to the Conference the best wishes of the Secretary-General for a constructive session. He also stressed the important role the international community had entrusted to the Agency in prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

61. In the course of the NPT Review Conference, held at Geneva in May 1975, the participants, despite divergences of views on a number of points, had fully agreed that the activities of the Agency in applying safeguards and providing assistance to Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be considerably expanded and strengthened. The Review Conference had considered all the aspects involved in the new and highly important functions devolving upon the Agency in relation to nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, including their economic and legal implications and the need for environmental protection.

62. The Review Conference had specifically affirmed that it considered the Agency to be the appropriate international body through which non-nuclear-weapon States could obtain the benefits of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes under Article V of NPT, and it had urged the Agency to expedite consideration of a draft international agreement to that end and to undertake technical studies as requested by the General Assembly in 1974.

63. Further, the Review Conference had recommended that the Agency should study the potential advantages of establishing regional or multinational nuclear fuel cycle centres, to be operated under Agency safeguards. It had also invited those States exporting nuclear materials and equipment to adopt standard requirements for safeguards on such exports and, moreover, to extend the application of safeguards to importing States which were not parties to NPT. Finally, it had advocated the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different areas of the world, in which field the role to be played by the Agency was evident.

64. The world energy crisis and the rise in oil prices had improved the competitiveness of other energy sources, and nuclear power stations could henceforth acquire serious economic interest for a number of developing countries. In those circumstances, careful appraisal should be made of the industrial infrastructure of interested countries and of the availability to them of trained scientists and technicians able to operate and maintain the nuclear power plants.

65. The decision taken by the Agency to hold an international conference on nuclear power and its fuel cycle in 1977 was one of particular interest to the developing countries.

[6] By Resolution GC(XVIII)/RES/313, para. 2.

66. The accelerated development of nuclear power should naturally be given full attention by the Agency, with the possible hazards to the environment from radioactive wastes being taken into account. Another matter requiring serious study was safety in the operation and maintenance of nuclear plants.

67. While it was recognized that nuclear power might meet many of the energy requirements of developing countries, alternative sources of energy should not consequently be neglected. It

was with that consideration in mind that the General Assembly at its seventh special session had proposed that an energy institute be established.

68. Those vital substantive issues emphasized the important role of the Agency as it approached its twentieth anniversary. The results of the Conference's deliberations would be received with the greatest interest.

● The meeting rose at 4.55 p. m.