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President: Mr. H.N. SETHNA (India)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(XXIII)/INF/188/Rev.5.

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1978 (GC (XXIII)/610) (resumed)

1. Mr. KANAZAWA (Japan) congratulated the President on his election and expressed his appreciation to the Indian Government for its hospitality.
2. He pointed out that as the availability of oil seemed certain to decrease considerably in the years ahead, peacefully applied atomic energy would constitute the most important alternative energy source for a long time to come. The Agency, which was the focal point of international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, had already achieved substantial results in that respect and its role would undoubtedly become increasingly important. One of its main tasks would be to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, while seeing to it that the proliferation of nuclear weapons was prevented and that peaceful activities were not subject to unnecessary control by virtue of the requirements of non-proliferation. At the same time, the accident that had recently occurred at a nuclear power plant in the United States of America had made people aware of the urgency of ensuring safety in nuclear power production.
3. The International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE), the final reports of which would shortly be available, was aimed at making technical and analytical studies that would help to reconcile the requirements of non-proliferation with those of the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Countries of very different categories, for example nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, countries already advanced and others still developing in nuclear technology, and countries supplying and consuming nuclear materials, had taken part in the work and had jointly studied their common problems, thereby deepening their understanding of them. Once the work of INFCE was complete, it would be well to put into effect the various technical and institutional measures and arrangements proposed in the final reports, among them arrangements for the international storage of plutonium and several other measures on the subject of which discussions within the framework of the Agency had already been started. It was up to the Agency to play an active role in the post-INFCE activities and in that respect his delegation was particularly struck by a proposal the Director General had made during his opening address, namely that the Board of Governors should set up a committee of the whole membership of the Agency to work out a set of guidelines which would make it possible to establish an internationally acceptable framework for guaranteeing supplies of nuclear fuel under adequate safeguards. His delegation also wholeheartedly endorsed the two basic principles which the Director General considered should govern activities following upon INFCE: first that the

cornerstone of all non-proliferation efforts must remain the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, secondly, that the Agency should play a key role in such international activities.

4. Another recent event deserving mention was the successful conclusion of the negotiations for a convention on the physical protection of nuclear materials, which his country hoped would be signed and ratified by all the countries of the world.

5. The Three Mile Island accident, although unfortunate, had served as a timely warning, and the Agency had subsequently sponsored a meeting of experts on nuclear reactor safety. It had also made great efforts, in addition to the Nuclear Safety Standards (NUSS) Programme, to evaluate the safety of the environment and to formulate new proposals for strengthening safety measures. His country was willing to take an active part in that work. The Agency should also take the lead in peaceful applications of nuclear energy other than power production, such as the use of isotopes and radiation, which could contribute to the welfare of mankind. It was hoped that the Agency would increase both the amount and effectiveness of its technical assistance to developing countries in that area.

6. His country had always contributed its due share towards technical assistance, and additional contributions in various forms had often been made. Aware that it was important to further strengthen the Agency's activities in Asia and the Pacific, Japan had hosted, in 1979, a meeting of representatives from signatory States of the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA), which had studied, among other things, the establishment of an Asian regional centre for research and training. Japan had also hosted an international workshop on food irradiation, organized by the Japanese Government, and intended to continue its efforts in regional co-operation. His country, which was extremely poor in energy resources, was concentrating its efforts, in close collaboration with the Agency, on the development of its nuclear power

industry. With the twenty reactors at present in service, its generating capacity had reached 13 780 000 kW. Japan ranked second in the world in nuclear power production, which now accounted for roughly 11.2% of the electricity generated in the country. Furthermore, aware of the limits on uranium resources, Japan was striving to make the best possible use of them and was working on an advanced thermal reactor and a fast breeder reactor. As far as nuclear fuel was concerned, a pilot enrichment plant had recently been put into partial operation and preparations were being made for the construction of a commercial reprocessing plant. All those activities were being conducted in full accord with the objective of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and all nuclear facilities in Japan were operated in accordance with the provisions of NPT and the safeguards agreement concluded with the Agency.

7. The year 1980 would be an important one for NPT, since the second Review Conference of the Parties to NPT was to be held in the course of it. Under the present circumstances, further strengthening of the system designed to prevent further nuclear proliferation was essential, and to achieve that end NPT would have to be made a truly universal treaty. His delegation appealed to all States that had not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so immediately and also urged nuclear-weapon States to follow the example of the United States, the United Kingdom and France in taking positive steps to rectify the inequalities inherent in NPT. For its part, Japan hoped to take an active part in preparations for the coming NPT Review Conference and looked forward to a successful outcome of the meetings.

8. More than ever before the Agency was having to face diverse and complex problems in the discharge of its functions and to live up to the trust reposed in it by the countries engaged in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But both the human and financial resources of the Agency were limited, and it was to be hoped that the Secretariat would step up its efforts to ensure a well-balanced distribution of the budgetary appropriations.

9. In conclusion he wished to express his appreciation to the Director General and his associates for the efforts they were making to enable the Agency to fulfil its mission in the difficult situation prevailing today.

10. Mr. SITZLACK (German Democratic Republic) congratulated the President on his election and thanked the Government and people of India for their hospitality. It was a great pleasure that the General Conference was being held in a country where nuclear research and technology were so advanced.

11. The prosperity and progress of mankind depended on the consolidation of world peace and it was with that in mind that the socialist countries had expressed their willingness to conclude the negotiations under way for the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons tests and for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime so as to ensure access by all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, without discrimination and under effective international control based on Agency standards. Only a few weeks before, in Berlin, on the occasion of the German Democratic Republic's thirtieth anniversary, Mr. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, had put forward new proposals on arms limitation that deserved whole-hearted support. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States had shown that complex international problems could be solved by negotiation; one must hope that it would be ratified without delay since it would tighten the network of bilateral and multilateral agreements on arms limitation and pave the way for further progress in other negotiations and in the implementation of Article VI of NPT.

12. At the signing of SALT II, both States had advocated further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, and his country also felt that the second NPT Review Conference to be held in 1980 should serve that aim and contribute to progress in limiting the nuclear arms race. It continued to believe that the universality of NPT was an essential condition for its effectiveness and for full international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. All States that had not yet acceded to the Treaty were therefore urged to sign and ratify it.

13. It had recently become clear, once again, to what extent the utilization of nuclear energy was contingent on progress in the fields of nuclear safety, environmental protection and safeguards. In that connection the Agency's Nuclear Safety Standards (NUSS) Programme was a most valuable activity. The binding regulation of all matters concerning safety and protection was of vital importance for the peaceful use of nuclear energy; hence the drafting and amendment of regulations should be made a permanent task for governmental authorities in charge of radiation protection and nuclear safety.

14. His country was systematically developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy within the framework of regulations of that kind. During the past year it had been decided to build two new training and research reactors, and also the fourth unit of the Greifswald nuclear power plant, which would boost the station's output to 1760 MW. The increase in the German Democratic Republic's electrical generating capacity would be accounted for in the future mainly by nuclear power plants constructed in close collaboration with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, particularly under the aegis of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). That organization was playing an important part in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and co-operation between its member States in the construction of nuclear power plants was to be intensified with a view to attaining an increase of more than one third in their electricity output. Activities relating to nuclear safety and radiation protection were co-ordinated by the CMEA Scientific and Technical Council for Radiation Protection.

15. Both the Safeguards Implementation Report and the Annual Report indicated, on the basis of results yielded by Agency inspections, that all nuclear materials under Agency safeguards could be accounted for in the nuclear activities declared by those countries. That was a satisfactory finding conducive to improving mutual confidence and peaceful co-operation between countries as well as international security. It was disturbing, however, to see that the number of countries whose nuclear activities were still uncontrolled seemed to be on the increase. The trend was alarming inasmuch as the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States would considerably enhance the risk of a nuclear war, especially in areas beset by conflicts. International security demanded that commitments devolving from safeguards agreements should be strictly observed and that the Agency should be given maximum support in carrying out its inspections and developing its safeguards system, which still needed to be further improved.

16. His country had taken an active part in the drafting of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and he was happy to see the recent conclusion of the negotiations.

17. It was encouraging to note the Agency's activities in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities for the promotion of the exchange of information on the peaceful use of nuclear energy; the Agency had organized many excellent scientific and technical meetings and had continued to operate INIS. The international character of INIS could be further strengthened by implementing the INIS/AGRIS Direct Access Project.

18. The Agency's technical assistance programme was an important activity in promoting the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world. His country was therefore actively supporting the programme, to the best of its ability, and had organized four study tours and one training course during the past year. In 1980, it would be increasing its voluntary contribution to the General Fund for technical assistance to 265 000 marks.

19. With the advent of nuclear energy mankind had been faced with a choice - either to use the atom to construct a new basis for life, or to misuse it and bring death and destruction to the whole world. It was therefore vital to replace the balance of terror by a balance of trust between States. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) was an important step in that direction and the Agency, for its part, was endeavouring not only to prevent the negative nuclear option but also to promote the positive one so that the benefits of nuclear energy could be fully enjoyed. All Member States should concert their efforts and help the Agency to tackle all the problems involved in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, since more than 20 years' experience had shown that, as a world-wide authority, the Agency was the one predestined to deal with them.

20. Mr. NIMPUNO (Indonesia) said that the Agency had its own role to play in the achievement of the objectives fixed for the coming decade, namely increased prosperity, peace and stability for the whole of mankind. It was his delegation's hope that nuclear technology, as applied within that context, would help to speed up Indonesia's development, which was based on a three-point strategy aimed at co-ordinating and integrating the equitable distribution of development capability in all areas, accelerating national growth, and promoting political and social stability. His delegation hoped that a strategy of that kind would contribute to subregional, regional and international progress, and was convinced that the Agency would be able to achieve positive results by applying the same principles.

21. Within that context the Indonesian delegation was gratified to see that Member States of the Agency were becoming increasingly aware of the need to find ways and means of promoting co-operation in the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Agency should encourage the development of new energy sources that took into account the future needs of the developing countries, and accordingly, the following measures were to be recommended: first, research activities should be carefully scrutinized so as to determine where there were gaps that needed filling from the standpoint of the future requirements of developing countries; secondly, research and development efforts should be co-ordinated; and, thirdly, procedures should be devised to facilitate the exchange of information necessary for the interregional application of research results.

22. It was encouraging to note, within that context, that the Agency had in fact helped to make headway in scientific and technical co-operation in the region of Asia. In particular, the programmes launched under the Regional Co-operation Agreement (RCA), the number of which had risen from six to eight, had yielded good results and, in his opinion, deserved further efforts on the part of those concerned as well as an increase in the Agency's own contribution. The programmes should not only have the benefit of participation by the developing countries, but

by the technologically advanced countries as well, so that they could also serve the purpose of transferring technology. Mention should be made, for example, of the programmes for the industrial applications of isotopes and radiations, which would be of great value to RCA members, especially in the processing of latex, the preservation of fish by irradiation and the rearing of buffalo. All those projects would contribute either directly or indirectly to the prosperity of Member States.

23. With regard to the transfer of nuclear power plant technology, it was essential that the implementation of nuclear power programmes in developing countries should be given high priority among Agency activities. In view of the numerous problems already encountered in that respect, his Government felt that countries advanced in nuclear technology should not make matters worse by stipulating various limits and restrictions that slowed down the efforts made by the developing countries to meet their energy needs through nuclear technology. Recognizing the need to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Indonesian Government believed that a comprehensive nuclear test ban, Agency safeguards and the physical protection of nuclear materials were the best ways to achieve that end. In that connection, the Agency played an important part by facilitating the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and employing its safeguards system to prevent the use of nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes.

24. With regard to the implementation of technical assistance programmes, so vitally important for the developing countries, his delegation felt that there would have to be a proper balance between the funds allocated for such programmes and the appropriations for the safeguards programme, which had increased over the past year. The number of Member States starting out on nuclear programmes justified an increase in the funds available for technical assistance activities. In terms of the distribution of such funds, only two areas had shown a percentage increase in 1977, namely the general development of nuclear power and nuclear physics. That state of affairs was nevertheless acceptable, in his opinion, especially in the case of the former area, which had undergone marked expansion. Furthermore, it was heartening to see that unliquidated obligations had continued to decrease.

25. In the field of nuclear power, the measures adopted by the Agency to assist developing Member States to train qualified personnel were to be welcomed. In view of the interdependence prevailing in the world of today, an initiative of that kind was essential in furthering co-operation between the developed and developing countries.

26. As far as the assignment of posts at all levels within the Agency was concerned, it had to be pointed out that the principle of equitable distribution between the advanced and developing countries was still not being applied.

27. His delegation wished to reaffirm its continued support for the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, which was of very great value to scientists from many developing countries.

28. Mr. PECQUEUR (France) said that one could not fail to be struck by the almost universal slow-down in nuclear energy development at a time when the world energy situation made the need for it increasingly urgent. It was thus necessary to make all those concerned as fully aware as possible of the problem in order to stave off a recession in the world economy which could threaten world peace and stability.

29. Energy was vital for all countries even if their consumption varied considerably. The energy question was both a technical and a political one, and could only be solved by establishing real co-operation between consumer and producer countries. Oil and coal were worrying problems from the technical, physical and political points of view. Energy conservation was essential, but only gradual and limited progress had been made in that direction. It was therefore necessary to turn to all new energy sources, and especially to nuclear energy, which could be meeting about 15% of the world's energy needs by the year 2000.

30. With respect to the dangers of proliferation, the IAEA was to be congratulated on its organizational work for INFCE, which had shown that no fuel cycle should be rejected on the grounds of proliferation risk alone if there were valid economic arguments in its favour. The political inferences of that international technical evaluation must now be drawn. France had made known the main thrust of

its policy on that question in October 1976: on the one hand, all countries should be assured of a secure and economic supply of materials and services and, on the other, an uncontrolled spread which could lead to the proliferation of nuclear arms must be avoided. France had tried to find substitute solutions, particularly in the areas of enrichment and research reactors, and had paid special attention to the problems of the plutonium cycle and the international plutonium storage scheme. The French delegation hoped that a consensus could be reached on specific proposals which would assure the development of nuclear energy throughout the world while at the same time allowing a meaningful reduction of proliferation risks.

31. As far as risks to the health of people and the environment were concerned, it was clear that the nuclear sector produced less harmful effects than fossil fuels, and it was by no means certain that other new energy sources would give comparably good results. As for disasters, it should be pointed out that the Harrisburg accident had produced nothing more than psychological shocks, but, clearly, efforts to strengthen safety would not be relaxed. Where the long-term harmful effects of radiations were concerned, much work remained to be done in determining the interaction between radiation and living matter, but it should be remembered that radioactivity was a natural phenomenon to which man had been exposed for thousands of years. It should be possible gradually to solve the problem of public acceptance by improving communications with the public and through appropriate long-term management of State affairs.

32. Present-day energy problems could not be solved without increased use of nuclear energy, and France believed that the development of fast breeders was essential, particularly in order to make the best use of world uranium reserves.

33. For its part, France had decided to increase at least tenfold its nuclear energy production between 1975 and 1985, by which date half of its electricity would be supplied by that source; the rate of installation needed for that purpose had virtually been achieved already with 5000 MW coming into service annually. France was also expanding its nuclear fuel cycle industry and had likewise stepped up its research and development effort, particularly in the fields of nuclear safety and reprocessing.

34. While congratulating the IAEA on the conscientious manner in which it had carried out its numerous tasks, his delegation was nevertheless still concerned at the very steep rise in the Agency's budget, which had increased the assessed contribution of France from \$950 000 in 1973 to approximately \$4.5 million in 1980. Those increases were large by comparison with the growth rate of the budgets of Member States themselves, which was why France had been unable to approve the most recent draft budget presented by the Board of Governors despite the high priority which it attributed to the Agency's activities. France hoped that general warning would be borne in mind when future budgets were being drawn up and that the Agency would continue to try to manage its finances in a spirit of strict economy. As for its voluntary contribution, the French Government, barring unforeseen circumstances, would be increasing it to \$450 000 in 1980; that marked a rise of 50% over 1979, which showed the particular importance France attached to technical assistance activities. With respect to contributions in kind, France had supplied the services of experts, training facilities and laboratory equipment as well as hosting various symposia and other meetings.

35. Bearing in mind the universal mission of the IAEA, the French delegation hoped that China would agree as soon as possible to take its proper place within the Agency.

36. Mr. LEE (Republic of Korea) said that his country had become increasingly aware of the importance of nuclear energy because of its dependence on the Middle East countries for oil and the scarcity of indigenous resources. The Republic of Korea was in the process of expanding its energy production facilities and planned to generate 50 GW from nuclear power stations by the year 2000.

37. Faced with that formidable task, his country fully recognized the importance of long-term manpower training and was concerned about securing an assured supply of nuclear fuel in view of existing international constraints. In that context his delegation was pleased to report that the first training course on the Technical Review of Nuclear Safety had been successfully completed in September 1979 with the assistance of the Secretariat, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Argonne National Laboratory, to whom his delegation

wished to express its sincere gratitude. His Government would be seeking the technical support of the Secretariat in 1980 with the aim of stepping up technical training in the field of nuclear safety. The courses organized in Korea could be developed in such a way as to constitute a Regional Co-operation Agreement training centre.

38. Assurance of supply for the nuclear fuel cycle was of the greatest importance and could be dealt with under Article VI of NPT at the second Review Conference.

39. The Republic of Korea commended the Secretariat on its efforts to apply effective safeguards, and his delegation wished to stress that the law on atomic energy in Korea stipulated that atomic energy must be used solely for peaceful purposes. His Government believed that the risk of proliferation could be more effectively countered by political than by technical means, and that in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual trust. A more comprehensive international regime should be established which would harmonize the requirements of supplier and recipient countries.

40. His delegation hoped that the regime which followed upon INFCE would enable a stable supply of services and fuel to be assured. A new international order should also be set up for the transfer of technology, since the developing countries required technical assistance from the advanced countries in order to be able to use nuclear energy and in order to construct, operate and maintain large nuclear power stations. The second NPT Review Conference should provide means for transferring to the developing countries, without discrimination and under Article VI of the Treaty, the technology needed for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

41. His delegation felt that it was necessary to establish a multinational reprocessing centre which would serve the needs of the participant countries until national centres were one day created. It urged the Secretariat to continue its study of the establishment of such a centre, which would be of benefit to both the developing countries and the industrialized countries from the point of view of non-proliferation.

42. The Republic of Korea increasingly recognized the importance of nuclear safety, especially since the Three Mile Island accident, and fully intended to devote additional efforts and resources to that area. It was pleased to note the initiative taken by the Secretariat in augmenting its nuclear safety activities.

43. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) congratulated the President on his election, which was a tribute to India and all the countries of the region. He thanked the Indian Government for hosting the General Conference in New Delhi, the majestic monuments of which were a reminder of the shared history of the peoples of the subcontinent. Pakistan was proud that the Nobel prize for physics had been awarded to Professor Abdus Salam, the Director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. The receipt of such a distinction was an honour which also reflected on the Agency.

44. The present session was taking place at a critical time in the development of nuclear energy, which had been challenged by political leaders, scientists and environmentalists. The energy crisis had worsened. The industrialized countries were suffering as a result, but the consequences were even more serious for the developing countries, which required energy to build up an industrial infrastructure. Because it lacked fossil fuels Pakistan spent more than 45% of its foreign exchange earnings on oil, and only nuclear energy would enable it, like the other developing countries, to satisfy its electricity needs. If it continued, the energy crisis would threaten the safety and welfare of both the industrialized and developing countries. Instead of forcing prices up by trying to outbid each other, all countries should collaborate to find a solution. All were interdependent, and no country could achieve the goal alone. They should work together to ensure that existing energy sources and raw materials were used to best advantage, to exchange their technical knowledge and not to waste the resources of future generations. They should also plan the future of nuclear energy, production of which had slowed down, so that it could meet future demand for electricity. Only nuclear energy would be capable of coping with the world's needs in the coming decades.

45. He had to stress the inability of the international community to combat proliferation and reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Those weapons continued to be manufactured and tested and the States which possessed them were not even capable of preventing other States with which they had special relationships from manufacturing them in turn. What was worse, those countries failed to denounce the actions of some countries such as South Africa when they carried out nuclear-weapon tests. The same States which were protesting against imaginary

risks of proliferation and which had called for the conclusion of NPT remained silent when faced with real proliferation and appeared even to be trying to divert attention from it. Pakistan urged the Agency to work closely with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to clear up completely the matter of the nuclear test alleged to have been carried out by South Africa.

46. Pakistan had always supported the fight against proliferation. The developing countries had no intention of using the resources they so urgently needed to ensure their development for the purpose of arming themselves. Pakistan, which had played a part in convening the United Nations Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States in 1968, had been calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in South East Asia since 1972. It had declared that it would neither acquire nor manufacture nuclear weapons. Since India had given the same assurance, despite having already carried out a nuclear explosion, the two countries could, by issuing a joint declaration, agree to make their region a nuclear-weapons-free zone. Such a step would be in line with the interest of world peace and the economic development of India and Pakistan.

47. Three years previously Pakistan, along with 25 other countries, had put forward a draft amendment to Article VI aimed at securing fairer representation for the areas of Africa and the Middle East and South Asia, which were at present under-represented. That amendment had been acceptable to the majority of countries, as Resolution 361 adopted at the twenty-second session of the General Conference had indicated. Now that negotiations had taken place, the time was ripe to adopt that amendment. It would not affect the existing balance but would do justice to the increasing role which the countries of Africa and the Middle East and South Asia were playing in respect of energy supply and the development of nuclear technology.

48. The allocations for technical assistance were inadequate and would not allow the Agency to satisfy all technically sound requests. The safeguards budget, by contrast, was to receive a disproportionate increase. Pakistan recognized the usefulness of the Agency's safeguards system but believed that the existing imbalance between safeguards activities and promotional activities ran counter to the Statute and was detrimental to the Agency's effectiveness. Not only did technical assistance receive insufficient funding, it was also subject to the imposition of increasingly strict conditions on the developing countries. There was a tendency within the Agency to make a distinction between signatories and non-signatories of NPT that was contrary to the Statute. Moreover, certain countries were refusing to have inspections made on their territories by nationals from countries which had not signed NPT. All the Agency's Members had the same rights, and such a tendency was bound to have unfortunate consequences.

49. The International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) would soon be completed and would help create conditions favourable to the development of nuclear energy. That development could only take place in a climate of mutual trust and respect for international commitments on the part of all, particularly the supplier and exporter countries. The fight against proliferation must not serve as a pretext for going back on existing agreements.

50. Pakistan was continuing to work for the development of nuclear energy as a means of enhancing food production, improving safety and hygiene and increasing industrial output. It had discovered new uranium deposits and had expanded its facilities for ore exploitation. A Centre for Nuclear Studies now offered post-graduate training. A sixth nuclear medical centre had been completed and a seventh was under construction. Part of the third centre of the Nuclear Institute for Food and Agriculture had begun to operate. In June 1979 the fourth summer college on "Physics and Contemporary Needs" had taken place, and those colleges would henceforth be held each year.

51. In conclusion, he wished to congratulate the Agency and the Director General on the results obtained during 1979.

52. Mr. NORD (Norway), after congratulating the President on his election, said that he wished to outline the report of the Norwegian Royal Commission which had been appointed to assess the safety of nuclear power. The report analysed safety factors related to the utilization of nuclear energy including the routine operation of light-water reactors in nuclear power stations, the risk of accidents, the processing and storage of radioactive wastes and problems connected with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. A majority of the Commission's members had concluded that the routine operation of nuclear power stations would not lead to releases or other irregularities involving greater risks than would be expected from other complex industrial processes and that the risk of major accidents during the operation of nuclear power stations could not reach an unacceptable level. The Commission had moreover emphasized that it was necessary to apply high standards and adequate surveillance through international arrangements and inspection; to ensure the protection and strict surveillance of the transport of nuclear material; to take into account, when evaluating the introduction of a nuclear programme, the increased possibility of proliferation of nuclear weapons and the need to make international safeguards extensive and effective; and, lastly, to tighten up loopholes in NPT. The majority of the Commission's members had also concluded that the disposal of high-level wastes in deep stable rock formations would be a safe solution and that the use of nuclear energy in Norway would be acceptable provided that various qualifications and requirements were fulfilled. The reason he had examined the Commission's conclusions in some detail was that they might help to draw attention to problems of general interest to the Agency's Members.

53. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the Agency's supplementary nuclear power safety programme and recommended that it be financed under the Regular Budget. It also attached great importance to the Agency's work in the area of nuclear safety and environmental protection, including the publication of Codes of Practice and Safety Guides.

54. The Agency's safeguards work had considerably increased during the past few years and there seemed to be some danger that the increased workload would result in less stringent control being exercised over each facility. Safeguards techniques should be improved. It was essential that the Agency should continue to be provided with the budgetary means necessary for the proper operation of its safeguards system, which was a widely recognized contribution to international security. However, his delegation was concerned at the sizable increase shown by the budgetary proposals for 1980 and felt it was essential to maintain at as low a level as possible those programme expenditures which could make do without a rise. As those observations were reflected in the budget proposals for 1980, his delegation would be able to accept them. Subject to parliamentary approval, it could also accept the target proposed for voluntary contributions to the General Fund for the same year.

55. Amendment of Article VI of the Statute in order to increase the membership of the Board was a difficult matter. A small Board was probably more effective, but it was likewise important that Members should have a fair chance to be represented on the Board. In those circumstances the problem must be handled very cautiously since any change might upset the delicate balance achieved through careful negotiations over the years.

56. His delegation wished to express its satisfaction at the ratification of NPT by several countries since the last session of the General Conference and hoped that those who had not yet acceded would reconsider their position.

57. It also welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on the draft Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the forthcoming completion of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE), and wished to express its appreciation of the valuable contribution made by the Agency to that work.

58. Mr. SMOLDEREN (Belgium) said that the numerous scientific titles held by Mr. Sethna qualified him particularly well for the Presidency of the twenty-third session. Holding the General Conference in New Delhi underlined the universality of the Agency and the common interests of its Member States. He wished to thank the Indian Government for its hospitality and also to extend his congratulations to the Director General.

59. The transfer of the Agency to its Permanent Headquarters at the Vienna International Centre should enable administration to be rationalized, services combined and job duplication eliminated. It should therefore be the occasion for a careful review of the way in which the workload was distributed. The Secretariat would then be able to release personnel and transfer them to priority activities. Good habits of economy, profitability and even of austerity should be adopted from the outset. The international organizations should not increase their expenditure by a percentage greater than their Member States were prepared to accept in their national budgets.

60. In view of the present financial difficulties the Agency should review its priorities and begin by allocating funds to the most important tasks. It would be inadmissible if the latter, particularly reactor safety studies, were to be financed from supplementary contributions when they constituted the main tasks of the Agency. Before expanding any part of its programmes, the Agency should make available the necessary means by reallocating budgetary funds or personnel. The Agency could also effect economies by reducing administrative, management and travel costs. It should, for example, try to obtain preferential rates from airline companies. It could also cut down the number of meetings of experts, which would have the additional advantage of allowing the experts to devote more time to the organizations to which they belonged.

61. Belgium attached great importance to the reactor safety programme, which it felt should be financed from the Regular Budget. In that field the Agency should concentrate not so much on carrying out research itself as on acting as a centre for the exchange and dissemination of information on behalf of various national bodies - one aim being to avoid job duplication and encourage initiatives. Such a programme, by helping to reduce the risk of accidents in nuclear power stations, would reassure public opinion and aid the growth of nuclear power.

62. With respect to the proposed amendment to Article VI, he recalled the position of his Government that a fair balance must be maintained, in the composition of the Board of Governors, between the technically advanced countries and countries which held seats by virtue of regional representation.

63. With regard to relations between the Agency and EURATOM, he welcomed the accrediting of a resident representative of the EEC to the Agency. Many facility attachments had by now been completed, a fact which demonstrated the sincerity of the intentions of the Community's Members. The lengthiness of the negotiations had been entirely due to technical difficulties. Their successful outcome enabled Belgium to urge countries which had not yet signed NPT to do so without delay and to urge those that had done so to place all their non-military facilities under the Agency's control. NPT did not discriminate between nuclear-weapon States and others where the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were concerned, a fact which would be stressed at the second Review Conference which was to meet in 1980. He wished to pay a tribute to the United Kingdom and to France, countries which had voluntarily placed a number of their facilities under safeguards.

64. The role of the Agency could only expand in the coming years. The energy crisis was giving way to a serious economic crisis, and nuclear energy had accordingly become vitally important for many countries, including Belgium. The Agency would thus be called upon to play a leading role in areas where information, co-ordination and promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were among the tasks at hand.

65. Mr. MOUNKEILLA (Niger) said he wished to assure the Conference of the wholehearted support of his Government, which was taking part in a session of the General Conference for the first time. He congratulated the President on his election, which was a tribute to the progress achieved in the nuclear field by India, a developing country. He also thanked the Indian Government for its generous hospitality.

66. Nuclear energy accounted for only 2% of total energy production but it could reach 20% by the end of the century. In 1978 nuclear power capacity throughout the world was 118 000 MW and that figure would quadruple by the end of the 1980s if present programmes were implemented; that was far from certain, however. Programmes drawn up after the 1973-1974 oil crisis had had to be revised downwards on several occasions. Concern with preserving the environment, ensuring safety and opposing nuclear weapons proliferation, together with the present recession and other factors, had caused the nuclear industry to be called into question.

67. Countries had succeeded neither in altering their energy policies nor in introducing substitute energy sources because, on the one hand, habits and patterns of consumption had proved to be too strong and, on the other hand, in the case of nuclear energy, the public had begun to fear that multiplying the number of power stations would increase the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation, pose waste management problems and intensify the risk of accidents.

68. As far as the risk of proliferation was concerned, figures showed that no country had taken advantage of the construction of a power station to manufacture nuclear weapons. It seemed rather that some people confused, either deliberately or unwittingly, the peaceful and military uses of nuclear energy. In that connection, he wished to quote an extract from a speech made by Colonel Seyni Kountché, the Head of State of Niger, who had said that while he did not wish to join in the debate on the place of nuclear energy in society he must emphasize that Niger, a uranium producer, did not have the means to transform uranium unaided, was already obliged to collaborate with the industrial countries to exploit it and was not capable of using it to produce energy. A number of countries reproached Niger for not having signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, to do so was to equate a uranium-producing country too quickly with an energy-producing country and a nuclear weapons manufacturing country. Colonel Kountché had recalled that Niger had always condemned proliferation and the possession of nuclear weapons, and had respected its commitments to the Agency. Niger, a poor landlocked country, was employing all its energy for its economic development and had no intention whatsoever of equipping itself with nuclear weapons. The Head of State had added that Niger would sign NPT when the appropriate time came. Doing so would not change in any way the principles applied at present, which were to make nuclear energy serve development in agriculture, medicine, research and electricity production. Niger would not abandon its rights and would conduct any possible negotiations in conformity with its interests.

69. Having concluded the quotation, he criticized those who had found fault with Niger's policy on uranium exports. The latter represented 80% of its total exports, which showed that they were essential to the national economy. Many countries had helped Niger to improve its economic position, and those countries deserved thanks. However, it was unacceptable that others who claimed that they wished to assist the developing countries should deny them the right to harness their natural wealth and exploit it commercially. Those countries were,

moreover, the very ones which supported South Africa and Rhodesia and which had orchestrated a press campaign against Niger. His country had always sold uranium openly in a manner which was verifiable and which conformed with its commitments. It would never accept any encroachment whatsoever on its sovereignty but was prepared to work with all those who respected that sovereignty. He hoped that the opening of Niger's mission in Vienna during 1980 would strengthen its links with the Agency.

70. Turning to the question of the fuel cycle, he recalled the controversy provoked by the development of nuclear energy which was responsible for the accumulation of wastes, some of which were highly radioactive. International solutions to that problem had to be sought. Accidents could occur in nuclear reactors but the evaluations which had been carried out showed that the risk was slight. Challenging the usefulness of nuclear energy was equivalent to challenging the future progress of all societies. It should not be forgotten that, if the advanced countries had to continue to produce energy in order to maintain the standard of living of their peoples, the developing countries were in even greater need of energy to raise their own standard of living. His Government expected a great deal from the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation, which would help it to make its choice.

71. He urged the General Conference to adopt the proposed amendment to Article VI of the Statute, which would help to lessen the gap between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. The development of relations between the economically advanced countries, the uranium-producing countries and other countries justified that amendment.

72. Niger would approve the draft budget even though it was too large. The developing countries needed technical assistance from the Agency. The interests of the Member countries of the Agency varied greatly because of the differences in their levels of development. Nevertheless, it was to be hoped that they would succeed in finding solutions to their problems.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.