



International Atomic Energy Agency

GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(XXIII)/OR.215
August 1980*

GENERAL Distr.
ENGLISH

TWENTY-THIRD REGULAR SESSION: 4-10 DECEMBER 1979

RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi
on Friday, 7 December 1979, at 10.50 a.m.

President: Mr. SETHNA (India)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda**</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
5 Arrangements for the Conference	1 - 5
(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session	1 - 5
7 General debate and annual report for 1978 (resumed)	6 - 127
Statements by the delegates of:	
Saudi Arabia	6 - 13
Egypt	14 - 28
Netherlands	29 - 47
Malaysia	48 - 62
India	63 - 73
Greece	74 - 81
Sweden	82 - 98
Viet Nam	99 - 104
Israel	105 - 116
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	117 - 127

*/ A provisional version of this document was issued on 17 January 1980.

**/ GC(XXIII)/620.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONFERENCE

(b) CLOSING DATE OF THE SESSION AND OPENING DATE OF THE NEXT SESSION

1. The PRESIDENT recalled that, under Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure, the Conference had to fix a closing date for the session, on the recommendation of the General Committee.
2. The General Committee had considered the matter and had authorized him to recommend on its behalf that 10 December 1979 be fixed as the closing date.
3. The recommendation of the General Committee was accepted.
4. The PRESIDENT further informed the Conference that the General Committee had recommended fixing Monday, 22 September 1980, as the opening date of the twenty-fourth regular session, which would be held in Vienna as usual.
5. The recommendation of the General Committee was accepted.

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

6. Mr. AL-KABBANI (Saudi Arabia) said that the Agency could not hope to live and grow in a political ivory tower. The General Assembly of the United Nations had recently decided, without even mentioning the IAEA, to inquire into reports that South Africa had conducted an atomic explosion, which was an act of proliferation whether or not the country carrying out the explosion was a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That might suit certain countries, but it was definitely not in the best interest of an agency entrusted with the implementation of NPT. In technical matters related to atomic energy, the Agency should be the sole organ on which the United Nations should rely.
7. The annual report for 1978 briefly described the situation faced by nuclear power. The decline in orders for power reactors was attributed to "public misgivings about the safety of nuclear power plants" and "proliferation". Such misgivings and fears were on the increase, although authorities and utilities were finding ways and means of making nuclear power safer and the Agency was expanding and intensifying its safety programme and activities. Nuclear power was also suffering from the mingling of political and technical matters and from tampering with the facts. The loud cries in the street, rather than sober scientific work, seemed to be gaining ground in assessments of the safety of nuclear power and thus in determining its future.

8. The public wished to be kept informed. If the Agency did not give it the truth, others would continue to mislead the public with appealing slogans. Neither the Agency nor nuclear commissions could accomplish much in scientific isolation surrounded by a hostile climate. The harm done to nuclear power at present would be felt ten or twenty years later - exactly as in the case of oil - although there the harm had derived not from inadequate public relations, but from excessive wastefulness.

9. It might seem absurd that the delegate of the largest oil-exporting country was taking so strong a line in favour of nuclear power, but the depletion of oil in the near future was not merely theoretical speculation, it was a scientific fact. While Saudi Arabia was doing its utmost to help industrial countries meet their oil requirements, it was the duty and obligation of those countries to conserve oil and to develop and exploit every other available source of energy. Saudi Arabia was more than keen on participating in any serious attempt to develop alternative energy sources. Large sums of money had been invested in joint ventures with other countries to utilize solar energy, and Saudi Arabia took great interest in all other methods of energy production, including nuclear energy.

10. A closely related matter was that Saudi Arabia was seeking help in ascertaining whether the Red Sea was being polluted by radioactive wastes being dumped into it. The Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) and the Agency should attend to that important problem.

11. Saudi Arabia spent millions of dollars on desalination and imported water at a cost that was sometimes higher than that of imported oil in the industrialized countries. Like many other countries in arid or semi-arid regions, Saudi Arabia therefore eagerly and expectantly observed work on nuclear desalination. It had been suggested that Saudi Arabia would have enough water to make deserts bloom and that a dual-purpose project consisting in generating electricity and using the heat to desalinate sea-water would be economically competitive. However, the annual report completely avoided mention even of the word "desalination". It was impossible to overestimate the importance of using nuclear energy for both desalination and power generation; in countries such as Saudi Arabia, that was a matter of dire necessity. Once nuclear safety reached a level where unnecessary fears of such uses would be dispelled, progress in that direction could be accelerated. The IAEA should guide the world community

by careful and scientific direction to a point where safety and radioactive waste management were advanced enough for the world to use nuclear energy with complete confidence in the results.

12. The Saudi Arabian delegation's views concerning the transfer of nuclear equipment or fissionable material or technology to Israel or South Africa and concerning the important issue of representation on the Board of Governors of the two areas of Africa and of the Middle East and South Asia were well known. The General Assembly had in 1978 invited the Agency to give "thorough, prompt and fair consideration" to the question of representation on the Board of Governors.

13. Saudi Arabia had continuously supported the Agency and admired its quiet and constructive work. In recognition of that, and because of the importance of the Agency's achievements, Saudi Arabia had contributed US \$100 000 to the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) in 1978. In 1979, Saudi Arabia had allocated more than one third of the total voluntary cash contributions received by the Agency for financing the supplementary nuclear power safety programme.

14. Mr. OSMAN (Egypt) said that he welcomed the convening of the Agency's General Conference in India, whose people had maintained their rich and impressive cultural heritage, while moving forward on the path of modernization.

15. The Agency's Regular Budget for 1980 had shown an unprecedented increase over the figures for the preceding years. During the Board meetings in June 1979, his country, together with the Group of 77, had taken a common stand on that question, after a thorough study of the difficulties involved, which were mainly due to unstable exchange rates, inflation and other unforeseeable increases in expenditure.

16. It was regrettable that a request was being made for new appropriations of nearly four million dollars, and he shared the concern expressed by other delegations about such substantial increases in expenditure each year. It was therefore gratifying to note that the Director General, in his opening address, had stressed the Agency's responsibility for continuing a policy of strict economy and financial stringency. At the same time, however, any reductions in funding should not relate to actual operational programmes and promotional activities of benefit to the developing countries.

17. His delegation attached great importance to the Agency's technical assistance programme, hence it deplored the fact that technical assistance and

other promotional activities had not kept pace with its regulatory and control activities. Leaving aside currency fluctuations and inflation, the technical assistance programme hardly showed any growth at all in real terms. There was a growing awareness, in the developing countries in general, and in the African countries in particular, of the many benefits that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could bring, hence the part of the Director General's statement concerned with the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA) for Asia was of special interest. Africa also needed the Agency's assistance in co-ordinating research programmes in agriculture and medicine, hence a regional co-operation agreement along the same lines as the RCA for Asia would be of great benefit to the African continent. Under it the Agency would be able to help in organizing regional training seminars in fields such as irrigation, water conservation, soil conservation and similar topics. Egypt would be willing to make available its experience and facilities, including the Regional Centre for the Arab Countries and the newly opened National Radiation Technology Centre, for such a programme.

18. Serious consideration should be given to the proposal to finance technical assistance from the Regular Budget. In the meantime it was hoped that the figure of \$10.5 million for the target for voluntary contributions to the General Fund in 1980 would be reached.

19. There was no doubt that the Agency's safeguards programme remained the focus of the non-proliferation efforts of all countries, and all Member States were urged to continue their support and co-operation in order to ensure its success. With such support existing efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could make headway. But at the same time the need for restraint in increasing the fast-growing safeguards expenditure should be kept in mind.

20. His delegation wished to reiterate its support for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear-free zones. In that connection, the General Assembly of the United Nations had recently adopted the resolution submitted by Egypt for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. He also supported the complete denuclearization of the whole area of Africa. It was the duty of all countries located in those two areas to comply strictly with the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and to refrain from developing military nuclear capabilities. Furthermore, there was an urgent need for the rapid conclusion of a treaty for a complete ban on nuclear weapon tests.

21. Over the past two years Egypt had taken part in the Agency meetings held in Vienna with the aim of drafting a convention on the physical protection of nuclear material in international transport. The meetings had reached a successful conclusion and a final act had been signed in October 1979. The entry into force of the convention would relieve the international community of a big burden and provide the world with added protection by which to prevent theft and ensure the safe transfer of nuclear material.

22. Over the past two years Egypt had also participated actively in the work of INFCE aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime in conjunction with the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The work done showed that the evaluation study had resulted in a large number of ideas for technical or institutional improvements. The INFCE plenary conference to be held in February 1980 would provide a concrete basis for the future utilization of nuclear energy and for mutual understanding and co-operation between consumer and supplier countries. In that connection the Director General's suggestion for a Committee of the Whole to ensure supplies of nuclear fuel and equipment under adequate safeguards was to be commended.

23. The question of the amendment of Article VI.A.2 of the Agency's Statute had been under discussion since February 1977. His delegation's views on the injustice of the continued under-representation, on the Board, of the areas of Africa and of the Middle East and South Asia in the present formulation of Article VI.A.2 had been made known during the debate on that important matter at the 1978 General Conference and in the Board of Governors. It was hoped that the present General Conference would arrive at a consensus by which to restore the balance in representation on the Board.

24. One of the Agency's most significant activities in recent years had been the expansion of its role in the areas of nuclear power, nuclear safety and environmental protection. In that respect, and also in its efforts to promote the application of nuclear techniques in environmental and safety research, the Agency deserved praise and encouragement.

25. At an international conference held in Hamburg in May 1979 - despite the fact that it took place only shortly after the accident at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - nuclear power was still declared to be the only visible energy alternative to the limited and rapidly depleting fossil fuel resources, particularly oil. Nevertheless, for several years nuclear energy had been the

subject of an extensive controversy, involving a wide range of questions and complex issues, which had caused a great deal of concern over the future of nuclear power.

26. His delegation shared that concern, which had been provoked by a series of recent events involving the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the risk of nuclear war by accident and the safety of nuclear plants. Those three important aspects of nuclear energy confronted Member States of the Agency in general, and the nuclear powers in particular, with great responsibilities.

27. It was up to the Agency to play an important and effective role in that regard, hence it was encouraging to note the contribution made by the Agency to the work of INFCE, its efforts towards non-proliferation through its safeguards programme, and its efforts for the consolidation and expansion of its nuclear safety programme. It was also good news that there would be an international conference on safety in Stockholm in October 1980.

28. But further efforts and political initiative were needed if the fears of the public were to be really dispelled, for example, complete nuclear disarmament and greater safety measures for the protection of man and his environment.

29. Mr. de BOER (Netherlands), after emphasizing his delegation's appreciation of the exceptional and heartwarming hospitality extended by the Indian Government and expressing the hope that the splendid ambience of New Delhi might contribute to the success of the Conference, said it was commonly known that the world would be facing serious problems in the field of energy if important and far-reaching decisions were not taken in time. Nuclear energy was regarded by most Governments as an important contribution to the solution of energy problems, though the development of nuclear energy was confronted with increasing difficulties. That had resulted in serious delays in the installation of nuclear capacity in comparison with the original plans. Although the fears and doubts that had certainly been one of the causes of those delays were perhaps not always justified, they nevertheless could not simply be neglected. His Government believed that public opinion had to be taken seriously and the public had to be informed about all the relevant aspects of nuclear energy. What was more important, solutions had to be found for any real problems.

30. He welcomed in that respect the initiatives announced by the Director General in the field of safety, and his Government would support those activities. The Netherlands would of course also participate in the international conference on nuclear safety to be convened on Swedish initiative.

31. As regards environmental problems, the management and storage of radioactive wastes was the most crucial. According to a comprehensive Netherlands Government study on storage of radioactive wastes recently published, there were satisfactory solutions available for that problem.

32. Owing to the tone of anxiety accompanying the broad discussions on atomic energy matters going on in the Netherlands, his Government intended to organize a wide-ranging public debate on the use of nuclear energy in the country. That nationwide debate was scheduled to last for about two years, after which final decisions would be taken on the utilization of nuclear energy for the generation of electricity.

33. There was no need for him to express again his Government's conviction that the further spread of nuclear weapons was a danger to the existence of mankind. If the number of States possessing nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices were to increase, the whole effort to halt the nuclear arms race and to bring about nuclear disarmament would be jeopardized.

34. NPT remained, in his view, the most efficient political tool with which to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. The Netherlands Government wished to express its gratification that Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, together with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Tuvalu had acceded to NPT during 1979.

35. Closely linked to the existing non-proliferation effort was the application of safeguards by the Agency. The application of full-scope safeguards in all countries would greatly strengthen confidence that peaceful nuclear energy was not being misused. The IAEA must therefore be given full support in fulfilling its tasks in that field. He also noted with satisfaction that a convention had been concluded on the physical protection of nuclear material. Although his delegation had hoped for a convention wider in scope, it considered it an important step towards more secure management of nuclear materials.

36. Under what conditions could the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes be fostered without creating unacceptable proliferation risks? It was that question which had created tensions between supplier and recipient countries

and between industrial and developing States. Such tensions could hamper international co-operation and could in the long run be counterproductive as regards non-proliferation policies. It was necessary to develop new multilaterally acceptable and universally applicable international rules for co-operation in nuclear matters.

37. In his Government's opinion, the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) was a first step towards a new consensus in that field. Such a complex exercise as INFCE constituted a great accomplishment, achieved with IAEA assistance, and his Government would carefully study the final report.

38. It had become clear during the work of INFCE that technical measures alone could not solve the basic questions at issue, and by now it was generally accepted that measures of a more political nature were needed if nuclear energy was to be used for peaceful purposes without increasing the proliferation danger.

39. The Director General had suggested the establishment of a committee which would, in particular, study ways and means of ensuring the supply of nuclear materials under appropriate non-proliferation conditions. His Government supported this proposal in principle, and believed that the useful work done by INFCE Working Group 3 in that direction should be followed up.

40. An IAEA expert group on international plutonium storage had started work about a year previously and his Government was already impressed by the positive results it was achieving. An effective international plutonium storage regime would considerably reinforce the present safeguards system and could pave the way for better relations in international nuclear trade. The Netherlands would co-operate to the full in the group's activities with a view to bringing about a satisfactory and timely conclusion to its work.

41. An expert group on management of spent fuel was exploring procedures for international co-operation in that field, in particular for the benefit of smaller countries. Such co-operation could be useful in evolving alternative ways of organizing the back end of the fuel cycle. In coming years the development of a generally accepted set of conditions for the export of nuclear materials and equipment had also to be pursued. Such generally accepted conditions would, inter alia, make nuclear trade more predictable and thereby remove possible fears that nuclear requirements were not going to be met.

42. As would be clear from what he had just said, various measures needed to be worked out in order to arrive at a new consensus and the issues involved called for treatment in various fora and according to differing time-tables. His Government

therefore had had some doubts as regards fixing the date for an international conference for the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as proposed by Yugoslavia. Such a conference could certainly play a positive role in the development of a new international nuclear consensus, but it seemed too early to decide when it could best be convened. In the meantime, agreement in principle had been reached during the current session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to convene the conference by 1983; in the view of his Government, the IAEA should play an active and central role in preparing the conference, and the Netherlands would do everything possible towards making it a success.

43. His delegation considered that the Agency's technical assistance programme was doing well, the total resources allocated to the programme having increased by nearly one third since 1977. He realized that, for the countries which needed the assistance most, progress might not be fast enough, but the figures were undoubtedly promising. There had also been a welcome increase in UNDP-financed assistance. The Netherlands, as the second largest contributor to UNDP, was happy to note the Agency's efforts to co-ordinate its activities with those of UNDP so as to render its assistance even more effective.

44. Among the principal forms of development assistance was the application of isotopes and radiation in agriculture. Progress in agriculture in a developing country often constituted the basis for its economic and social upswing. One important aspect of agricultural development was the prevention of food losses as a consequence of spoilage. In the Netherlands a Food Irradiation Programme had started within the framework of the International Facility for Food Irradiation Technology (IFFIT). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were also co-operating in the field of food irradiation and the outcome of all that work could be a substantial reduction in losses of food. It was therefore with some regret that he had noted a decline in the ratio which such activities bore to the overall programme of the Agency, primarily in favour of general atomic energy development and nuclear physics. He trusted that the next annual report would again show a rising trend in the field of application of isotopes and radiation in agriculture.

45. Although the budget for 1980 already represented a very large sum, further funds would now have to be provided because of the fall in the dollar exchange rate since June. He realized that the budgetary increase was to a large extent due to factors beyond the Director General's control. At the same time,

a net programme increase of 2.9% was relatively high, and the proposals for 1981 showed an even higher percentage. His delegation therefore wished to stress the need for efficient redeployment, wherever possible, of resources within the Agency's budgets during the next years.

46. Although, in the budget for 1980, the Netherlands would have preferred that a smaller proportion should be represented by the costs of general services, his Government was nonetheless prepared to accept the document as proposed.

47. The year 1979, with its ups and downs in the use of nuclear energy, certainly had not been an easy one, but he had every confidence in the IAEA as the appropriate organization to tackle those complex matters. He wished the Agency every success in the continuation of its vital task.

48. Mr. KHOR (Malaysia) wished on behalf of his delegation to convey to the Government of India its appreciation for the excellent facilities and the other assistance provided to ensure the success of the Conference. The meeting had had the inspiring experience of hearing the inaugural address of the Prime Minister of India. His statement would no doubt guide the Conference in its deliberations.

49. It was the hope of his delegation that the few days of its stay in India would furnish a new insight into the problems facing the world in its handling of the atom, and in particular would show how the power of the atom could be used to meet the increasing needs of mankind.

50. The two main pillars of the work of the IAEA were, as everyone knew, safeguards and technical assistance to developing countries.

51. With regard to safeguards it was satisfactory to learn that, in 1978 as in previous years, the Secretariat had not detected any diversion of significant amounts of safeguarded nuclear materials to military purposes. Five additional countries had acceded to NPT, making the present total 111. As a party to NPT Malaysia naturally welcomed that development and believed that NPT and IAEA safeguards together formed the best possible basis for preventing further horizontal proliferation. He also wished to congratulate the Secretariat on the additional progress made in the implementation of safeguards on nuclear facilities in the non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and in certain other countries.

52. The report of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) had reaffirmed the importance of IAEA safeguards, and had suggested that other measures such as regional fuel cycle centres and the international storage of plutonium were needed to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

53. Regarding that other pillar of the Agency's work, namely the provision of technical assistance to developing countries, the 1978 annual report stated that 64 projects involving the application of isotopes and radiation in agriculture and animal husbandry were now going on in some 41 countries. Malaysia had been a recipient of assistance in recent years and was appropriately grateful to the Agency.

54. Malaysia, in its efforts to improve its people's quality of life through science and technology transfer, had just embarked on a nuclear programme on a modest scale. Priorities in research were accorded to agriculture, medicine and industrial applications. As a newcomer in the field of nuclear research and its applications, Malaysia sought the co-operation of developed countries in providing research and training facilities for its personnel.

55. The Agency's Department of Research and Isotopes had been doing good work in promoting the use in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific region of nuclear techniques in tropical medicine, the investigation of water resources and certain branches of industry. The Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science (RCA) had benefited greatly from the assistance rendered by that Department of the Agency. Malaysia, as a member of RCA, was committed to supporting the various projects undertaken by that regional association and believed that the benefits accruing from some of those projects would also extend to countries outside the region. He wished to take the opportunity of expressing his appreciation for the contribution that Australia and Japan were now making to RCA.

56. How, then, should one take stock of and appraise the progress made during the last year in activities associated with those two pillars of the Agency's being to which he had been referring?

57. Malaysia believed that there should be universal adherence to NPT and that the Agency's safeguards system should be perfected if the world was to be protected from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. But one could not look at safeguards under NPT from the horizontal standpoint alone, although the emphasis

within the Agency in recent years had tended exclusively in that direction. It was a recognized fact that the nuclear arsenals already in the hands of some nuclear-weapon States were sufficient to destroy the world, and hence, while it was correct to speak of the need to apply safeguards to the nuclear activities of non-NPT countries, there should be - but unfortunately there was not - the same emphasis and attention being devoted by the IAEA to nuclear disarmament. An unjust lack of balance was therefore present, and in those circumstances it was hardly surprising that some States remained unconvinced of the benefits of NPT and that discussions on the subject of safeguards in the Board at times had a highly emotional overtone.

58. The Agency's Statute established a link between the two main pillars, namely promotional and regulatory functions. In fact, Article II of the Statute stated that the second was consequent on the first. But what did one find in practice? Safeguards and related activities had monopolized the time and energy of the Secretariat and the Board. One aspect of the Agency's promotional role, namely the provision of technical assistance, had been given second place and was funded literally from charity, while funds for safeguards went up by leaps and bounds and came from the Regular Budget. Could the Agency for long afford that dichotomy, that discrepancy, without its credibility and viability being seriously threatened?

59. The Agency's technical assistance programme continued to be seriously affected by lack of funds and the assignment of insufficient human resources. The few staff members in the Division of Technical Assistance were too pre-occupied with the day-to-day work of looking for experts, the delivery of equipment, the placement of fellows and meeting new requests from developing countries to have enough time for any serious evaluation of the overall situation. In fact, considering the restrictions and handicaps under which they were working, one was really amazed at the patience and dedication with which they continued their efforts.

60. The Director General in his report to the United Nations General Assembly in November and again in his report to the Agency's General Conference had drawn a very stark picture of the world energy situation, and had underlined the role that nuclear power could play in mitigating the energy crisis. He had mentioned the paralysis which had affected the energy programmes of some leading industrial countries. He had also presented a convincing scenario describing what would follow from competing demands on the fast disappearing

oil resources and the current lack of decision on nuclear power as a replacement for oil. However, Malaysia was glad to note that such paralysis and indecision had not prevented the Secretariat from providing assistance to the nuclear power programmes of the developing Member States of the IAEA. His delegation also welcomed the additional steps that the Director General had taken in respect of the Agency's safety programme following the Three Mile Island nuclear plant incident.

61. Decisions had recently been made in other fora which had a direct bearing on the statutory functions of the Agency. The United Nations General Assembly had just adopted a resolution calling for the convening of an international conference to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, with the IAEA playing an appropriate role. The United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, recently held in Vienna, had produced a set of proposals for the role of science and technology in the social and economic programmes of developing countries. Those developments gave scope for positive action on the part of the Agency.

62. It was the hope of his delegation that the discussions at the twenty-third regular session of the General Conference would bring out in all present a stronger belief in the potential of the atom both as a source of power and as a tool for promoting better agricultural methods, health, prosperity and peace in the world at large. But time was not on the side of those who only waited. The next step should be an agenda for action.

63. Mr. SINGH (India) said that India had played an active role in the IAEA since its inception and remained committed to the principles embodied in the Statute for accelerating the contribution of atomic energy to peace and prosperity throughout the world. Ever since the beginnings of its atomic energy programme over thirty years ago, India had remained steadfast in its resolve to utilize atomic energy solely for peaceful purposes.

64. The present Conference was being held at a time when the future of nuclear power in the world was under close scrutiny. Nuclear power plants had a safety record unparalleled by any other industry and measures should be taken to create informed public opinion for a wider appreciation of that fact. In view of the rapidly declining reserves of fossil fuels nuclear energy offered the only viable alternative source of energy in the coming decades. India considered that the Agency had a vital role to play in bringing about greater public

awareness of the benefits of nuclear power and, at the same time, disseminating information on research and development work in fields such as waste disposal, radiological protection and nuclear power plant safety in a manner which would allay unfounded fears and misgivings in the minds of the general public.

65. His delegation was pleased to note the new sense of urgency and purpose in the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear safety, as exemplified by the statement made by the Director General. India supported that important field of the Agency's activity and, as its contribution to that exercise, would make available to the Agency the services of its experts as and when required. With regard to the financing of the 1980 nuclear safety programme, his delegation felt that the Secretariat should make further efforts to locate the necessary funds from within the budgetary allocation of five million dollars. It also believed that there was scope for more funds to be diverted to that important work of the Agency by making reductions in non-promotional programmes and reallocations within other sub-headings.

66. Noting the increase in the proposed budget for 1980, as recommended by the Board of Governors, the Indian delegation again urged the need for greater economy. It viewed with serious concern the fact that safeguards activities continued to account for a disproportionate share of the Agency's resources and that the imbalance in the Agency's budget between promotional and regulatory programmes was becoming more pronounced with each passing year. He was referring in particular to the 2.3% programme growth under safeguards which had been partially offset by a 1.2% reduction for all other programmes, including promotional activities. It could not be ignored that the highest growth in the 1980 budget over the 1979 adjusted budget was under the headings of safeguards and administration.

67. The Agency seemed to be steering itself into a position where its overwhelming concern and the major thrust of its activities was to achieve limited non-proliferation objectives at the risk of hampering peaceful nuclear activities.

68. In India's view, the offers of some nuclear-weapon States to place certain civilian nuclear facilities of their choice under Agency safeguards for durations to be determined by them were limited and largely cosmetic gestures which failed completely to mitigate the inherent discrimination in the NPT safeguards regime. There was a danger that the Agency would miss the wood for the trees if it continued to engage in such limited safeguards activities, which

served no realistic purpose. The existing threat posed by the vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons represented a far greater risk to the survival of mankind than the consequences of horizontal proliferation. The real threat posed by the growing number and increased sophistication of nuclear weapons should not be viewed in the light of geostrategical or geopolitical perspectives of a few centres of power, since it was the future of the whole of mankind that was at stake. India also felt that more attention should be devoted to the immediate and overwhelming need for energy supplies, particularly in developing countries, where energy requirements determined not only the quality of life but the survival of millions.

69. India had noticed a disturbing trend towards the discriminatory acceptance of the Agency's safeguards inspectors by various States. His delegation regretted to note that certain States had been rejecting inspectors on totally unsupportable grounds. That would only result in States whose nationals had been rejected taking reciprocal action, thus creating a vicious cycle which would not only strain bilateral relations between Member States but also pose severe administrative problems for the Agency and possibly result in additional expenditure, owing to the need to maintain a larger number of inspectors.

70. The Indian delegation also regretted that the newly adopted Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency included principles which, in its view, were discriminatory and not in conformity with the Statute. The revised guidelines also attached conditions to the provision of technical assistance through formulations derived from a discriminatory treaty and simultaneously imposed progressive restrictions on peaceful activities. In those circumstances, India had declared that it was no longer interested in receiving technical assistance from the Agency since, as a matter of principle, it would not be able to give its consent to any undertaking that was not in conformity with the Statute. However, in consideration of the importance that it attached to the promotional activities of the Agency and in deference to the views of other Member States, India would continue to provide technical assistance to developing countries. It had made a modest contribution over the years to the technical assistance programme by providing fellowships and services of experts besides facilities for scientific visits. He was happy to announce that India would be making a voluntary contribution to the General Fund of US \$76 650, its assessed

share of the target. It was to be hoped that the target of \$10.5 million would be fully realized and also that the Agency would be able to reduce the unbalanced balance in the volume of technical assistance over the coming year.

71. The question of the amendment of Article VI.A.2 of the Statute again figured on the agenda. He wished to reiterate his delegation's support for the principle of more equitable geographical representation on the Board of Governors and express the hope that a workable formula acceptable to all would emerge from the Conference's deliberations.

72. The question of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia had been referred to the previous day by one of the speakers in the general debate. The general question of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world had been the subject of a comprehensive study undertaken by a United Nations group of experts. The most important and basic principle enunciated in that study had been that the initiative for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone should come from the States within the region concerned and that participation should be voluntary. That principle had been reiterated in the Final Document adopted by consensus by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, where it was clearly stated that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned. His Government attached great importance to that principle because it believed that for such a zone to be viable it should come into being as a result of initiatives taken jointly by the States concerned and should not be imposed on them. Reference had also been made to the question of safeguards in the context of proliferation. If international verification through safeguards was to be meaningful, it could not be confined to selected groups of nations or to particular geographical areas. It had to apply universally to all nations and to all parts of the world. He also wished to take the opportunity of recalling the Prime Minister's reference to India's nuclear programme in the course of his inaugural address when he had stated "we have never deflected from our commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy".

73. In conclusion, his delegation wished to express its sincere appreciation of the dynamic and efficient manner in which the Director General had conducted the Agency's affairs during the past year.

74. Mr. DOKAS (Greece) expressed the appreciation of the Greek delegation for the efforts of the Director General and his staff to realize the objectives of the Agency.
75. Although Greece had little first-hand experience in the field of reactor safety, it realized that nuclear power production would have a crucial role in meeting the energy needs of the country towards the end of the century and therefore supported the decision to expand the nuclear safety activities of the Agency.
76. The preparation of detailed safety codes and guides by the Agency and the technical assistance for their application was of special value for countries like Greece.
77. Also, the assurance of nuclear fuel supply and disposal of the radioactive wastes resulting from the operation of nuclear plants was of great importance for Greece and it trusted that the technical and analytical studies of the INFCE working groups would lead to a practical result with a positive contribution towards the development of nuclear power programmes, while at the same time minimizing the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons.
78. The world, and particularly the developing countries, had to meet the challenge of the growing demand for energy. In the coming few decades nuclear power would be the only competitive alternative for energy requirements. Greece recognized that non-proliferation and reactor safety were two very serious problems and obstacles to the development of nuclear power but it believed that they could be solved with the scientific and technical means currently available, if accompanied by sincere co-operation and genuine endeavour on the part of Member States.
79. He wished to inform Member States that Greece, after nine years of intensive and systematic exploration for uranium in northern Greece, had discovered considerable uranium reserves and potential reserves of still unknown extent.
80. The main efforts of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission were now being concentrated on the Serrai area, where the uranium deposits in the neogene sediments of the Strimon Basin were of great importance. A satisfactory number of bore-holes had been made and a medium-scale experimental mining operation was under way to prove the continuity and extension of the uranium-bearing lignites and bituminous clays.

81. Greece would continue to extend its support to the Agency's activities. It had already pledged its assessed share (US \$38 850 equivalent) of the target for the General Fund for 1980, had already pledged and paid its assessed share of the special contribution for the Agency's participation in INFCE during 1979 and, finally, had already remitted to the Agency an amount of \$5000 as a special voluntary contribution to the Agency's supplementary nuclear power safety programme.
82. Mr. ECKERBERG (Sweden) said he wished to express his appreciation for the generous hospitality accorded to the twenty-third regular session of the General Conference of the IAEA by the Government of India.
83. During the past year nuclear energy had been the subject of an intensive debate in terms both of safety and of the risk inherent in the spread of a nuclear explosive capability.
84. In many countries, including Sweden, the public at large and the political parties had been engaged in a polemic regarding the reliability of, and prospects for, nuclear power. The issues included the role of nuclear energy in future energy supply, operational safety, waste management, non-proliferation and the real cost of nuclear energy. Generally speaking, doubts about nuclear energy had led to a slow-down in the nuclear sector, intensified efforts to harness alternative sources of energy, and stricter conservation measures. In Sweden a consultative referendum on nuclear power had been scheduled for March 1980. The outcome of it would help to determine the future role of nuclear power in the country's electricity generation. There were at present six nuclear power plants in operation in Sweden. Four additional plants had been built but they would not be put into operation before the referendum. Nuclear-based electricity continued to account for a quarter of the total electricity generation in Sweden.
85. With regard to nuclear safety, the accident in March 1979 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, had been a dramatic reminder of the fact that matters of operational safety at nuclear facilities required the closest attention. Experience gained from the accident had already contributed significantly to the reinforcement of safety at nuclear power plants in a number of countries. For example, a commission appointed by the Swedish Government had included 49 specific recommendations for new and improved safety measures in its recent report.
86. Matters of health and safety and environmental effects associated with the use of nuclear energy neither could nor should be regarded as an exclusively

national concern. Hence intensified interest and joint efforts on the part of States were called for, and in that respect the Agency occupied a central position.

87. According to the Agency's annual report, there were 227 nuclear power reactors in operation in 21 Member States as of December 1978. The operational safety and the limitation of possible releases of radioactivity and radioactive effluents from those plants, as well as from other fuel cycle facilities, were governed by national regulations and monitored by national authorities. Their activities were largely guided by national standards based on the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) and other international bodies. The existence of those safety standards, which were in effect guidelines, had also been of value for countries embarking on nuclear programmes. It had rightly been pointed out that there was growing realization that accidents could have consequences extending beyond national boundaries. Hence it might now be the right moment to raise the status of the relevant safety standards, which should be integrated into the framework of an international nuclear safety agreement. The parties to it would commit themselves to implementing basic principles and minimum standards in the construction, operation and decommissioning of reactors, and also in respect of maximum doses, limits for the release of other substances, emergency planning and conditions for the handling and storage of waste. A commonly agreed minimum basis would be established through an international convention of that type and the achievement of it could be an important task for the Agency in the years to come.

88. Against that background his delegation welcomed the Agency's supplementary nuclear power safety programme adopted by the Board of Governors. The Swedish Government had made a voluntary contribution of US \$80 000 to help finance its implementation. The Swedish Government had further agreed to host an Agency conference on current nuclear power plant safety issues in October 1980, in Stockholm, aimed at promoting intergovernmental co-operation with a view to a consensus on nuclear safety.

89. With regard to proliferation risks, the development and achievement of nuclear explosive capabilities by additional States would not only gravely affect both regional and global security, but also be detrimental to efforts to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Hence it was to be hoped that no non-nuclear-weapon State would attempt to develop or acquire a nuclear explosive capability. All States were urged to do their utmost to enhance international confidence and trust. Furthermore, the nuclear-weapon States had an important contribution to make to the non-proliferation effort by implementing Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and taking specific steps to end the nuclear arms race and reduce their stocks of nuclear weapons.

90. Disturbing reports from some parts of the world that attempts were being made to achieve a capability to produce nuclear explosives made it clear how important it was to continue supporting and promoting NPT and the Agency safeguards system. The recent accession to NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty of several new countries was therefore encouraging.

91. The acceptance by all non-nuclear-weapon States of Agency safeguards on all their nuclear activities would be a particularly important contribution towards increased international trust and confidence. Full support should be given to the Agency in its work of improving the efficiency, and broadening the coverage, of its safeguards system.

92. The recently drafted Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material was another Agency-sponsored international measure directed against unlawful use of nuclear material, and all States ought to sign it.

93. During the past two years, the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) had involved a large number of States in a search for technical and institutional measures which would promote both nuclear supply and non-proliferation. The results of INFCE should assist Governments in their fuel cycle options and in their efforts to improve international confidence in nuclear energy programmes.

94. INFCE would also help to provide a basis for continued non-proliferation efforts, and would contribute to the strengthening of nuclear safety. It was obvious, however, that a number of problem areas related to non-proliferation would still require attention at international level in the 1980s. For example, the need for increased predictability of supply; internationally agreed criteria for the use and storage of plutonium; options for international co-operation in the storage and management of spent fuel; and extended coverage and efficiency of Agency safeguards. The overall aim should be to achieve an international consensus, which would include a set of guidelines for States

engaged in international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Such guidelines would be intended to enhance confidence, first, in the predictability and certainty of supply in the field of nuclear energy, and, second, in Agency safeguards and other measures aimed at ensuring that proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional States did not take place. The Agency could play a vital role in formulating the relevant recommendations.

95. Within that context, the Agency's study on international plutonium storage currently in progress was making encouraging headway. Sweden was taking an active part in it and had agreed to contribute approximately \$93 000 to the voluntary fund established for that purpose.

96. The parallel study by the Agency of international spent fuel management provided a useful forum for international discussion of practical solutions, including possible international co-operation in the field. The institutional aspects, including safeguards, were more apparent in the case of plutonium storage than spent fuel management. An international plutonium storage scheme could result in measures for control and storage of plutonium and would entail increased responsibilities on the part of the Agency.

97. In conclusion he wished to pledge Sweden's assessed voluntary contribution for 1980 to the General Fund, which amounted to \$138 600.

98. The Agency's responsibilities with regard to nuclear safety, the implementation and development of Agency safeguards and other agreed non-proliferation measures now represented a growing challenge to the organization, and its future role and responsibilities lay primarily in the promotion of nuclear safety and safeguards. Since those were essentially regulatory functions, nuclear fuel cycle supply activities, in his view, should be carried out separately from them.

99. Mr. NGUYEN DINH TU (Viet Nam) said that it was with great pleasure that his delegation was participating in the twenty-third regular session of the General Conference and was particularly gratified that the venue should be the capital of a country famous as a cradle of civilization. He wished to express his sincerest gratitude to the Government and people of India for the sympathy and support which they had always lent to the Vietnamese people in its defence of its just cause.

100. As the result of a succession of historical events the Vietnamese people had been obliged to conduct a long and weary struggle, extending over more than

one third of a century, and was now faced simultaneously with two onerous tasks -- reconstruction of the country and defence of the independence and liberty which had been won back at so high a price.

101. In spite of all those difficulties, his Government was conscious of the enormous benefits which nuclear energy could offer to the development of the economy, to the raising of living standards and to the improvement of the health of the population. For some years past, therefore, a certain effort had been made to develop the peaceful utilization of atomic energy in Viet Nam. In addition to promoting the training of experts in nuclear science and technology, various nuclear medicine laboratories had been established for diagnosis and treatment of illnesses using radioisotopes and ionizing radiation. A start had also been made on the application of nuclear techniques in agriculture, geological prospecting, analytical work and certain branches of industry.

102. After thanking the socialist and other friendly countries for their valuable co-operation and assistance in the first stages of the introduction of the peaceful uses of atomic energy in Viet Nam, he stressed his appreciation of the part played by the IAEA in promoting international co-operation and furnishing assistance to the developing countries. It was to be hoped that such assistance would become ever more effective. In particular, his Government was most grateful that the IAEA had acceded to the first requests for technical assistance submitted by his country. As a result, Vietnamese experts had been able to attend various training courses organized by the Agency.

103. After more than thirty years of war, the Vietnamese people had no other wish than to enjoy a lasting peace which would enable it to develop its economy and build up a life of happiness and well-being. However, it had always to be ready to preserve the freedom which it had reacquired at such great cost. The fact was that a certain Asiatic Power was threatening peace and security in the Far East and impeding the further development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy in Viet Nam and other countries in that part of the world. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam opted firmly for a foreign policy based on peace, co-operation and friendship with other peoples, and wished to develop its relations with all other States on the basis of peaceful coexistence. It was in that spirit that Viet Nam fully approved of the Treaty on Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT II) recently signed in Vienna and of the peace initiatives recently taken by the Soviet Union in Europe. The Socialist Republic of

Viet Nam was prepared to play an active part in the struggle to eliminate forever the risk of nuclear war and to defend world peace.

104. It was in the light of those considerations that his delegation wished the twenty-third regular session of the Agency's General Conference every success in its work.

105. Mr. EILAM (Israel) considered that the Agency faced complex tasks as a result of the increasing shortage of energy at reasonable costs, the urgent need to find alternative supplies of energy, and the shortage of drinking water in arid and semi-arid developing countries.

106. In the face of considerable difficulties the Division of Technical Assistance had been able to improve its operational systems and to assist in the implementation of national nuclear programmes in some developing countries although even greater achievements would have been more gratifying.

107. The escalation in the price of oil, the expected further rises in that price and the shrinking fossil-fuel reserves had led many Member States - particularly those not blessed by nature as far as sources of energy were concerned - to recognize that until the end of the century the only proven fuel for the production of electricity apart from fossil fuel would be nuclear fuel. The final communiqué of the Tokyo summit meeting of the industrialized countries at the end of June 1979 had warned that, without the expansion of nuclear power generating capacity in the coming decades, economic growth and higher employment would be hard to achieve; the members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance had signed an agreement on 28 June 1979 committing themselves to install about 15 000 MW(e) of nuclear power by 1990 to provide 30% of their electricity requirements; even oil-producing countries were considering the acquisition of nuclear technology, and some developing countries were attempting to minimize the impact of the energy crisis by achieving self-sufficiency in their fuel supply.

108. Energy-related problems such as siting, safety and public acceptability had forced the Government of Israel to review its energy expansion programme. However, Israel was committed to the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes to improve the standard of living of its people, and it was prepared to assist other developing nations, within the limits of its capacity, in those fields where its achievements could be of help to others, as in desalination and irrigation.

109. Israel was convinced that nuclear power programmes could be implemented in developing countries even though contemporary reactors were too large for the relatively low power consumption and small electricity grid in most of them.

110. In view of the projected growth of nuclear power in general, and the dependence of developing countries on the import of nuclear power technology and fuel supplies in particular, and in view of the danger of replacing one dependence by another, there was an urgent need for the Agency's technical assistance programmes to be adjusted to the future power needs of developing countries. The technical assistance programme should emphasize, inter alia, training and advisory services in planning national nuclear power programmes, in regulatory activities, siting, safety, manpower planning, etc., and in nuclear power plant operation.

111. International standards and uniformity might also be established in that manner, and might subsequently assist the Agency in performing its functions more efficiently.

112. Assistance should be funded from extrabudgetary as well as budgetary funds, after readjustment of the base rate of assessment to reflect the real income of countries, the redistribution of financial resources in the world and especially the huge income of the oil-producing countries.

113. Assistance should be provided by the Agency on a non-discriminatory basis and should correspond to a country's real requirements.

114. There was an immediate need for action and guidance by the Agency in the field of public acceptance on an international level, since opposition to the development of nuclear power had begun to take on world-wide proportions and there was a trend towards international solidarity of opposition movements.

115. A further crucial problem confronting human society in general, and developing countries in arid and semi-arid zones in particular, was the scarcity of drinking water. The State of Israel was making major efforts to contribute to the solution of that problem by desalination techniques. Semi-industrial models built in Israel were being used by various countries and work on a large-scale pilot plant was continuing. Those installations were still connected to conventional fossil-fuel power plants but the ultimate goal was to use nuclear power for desalination. The State of Israel was eager to share its know-how and experience in that field with all nations, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, and urged the Agency to take a leading part in such co-operation.

116. Finally, he commended the Agency on its part in the conclusion of the Convention for the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. It was to be hoped that the entire world would stand unified and that all Member States would co-operate in preventive measures against all kinds of terrorism involving nuclear material that might endanger the very existence of the international community.

117. Mr. CHOI HAK GUN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that he wished to express his gratitude to the Government and people of India for having put forth such great efforts to make preparations for the present session of the General Conference.

118. The IAEA was faced with the noble mission of accelerating the wide utilization of atomic energy for peace and the welfare of peoples throughout the world. At the present time, in spite of certain difficulties and obstacles, nuclear power was undergoing a process of steady growth and was one of the sources of energy which could to a substantial degree replace organic fuels and hydro resources. The Agency was paying considerable attention to various problems associated with the development of nuclear power, and was indeed intensifying its activities in that sphere.

119. His Government attached particular importance to the Agency's work on improving safety conditions at nuclear power stations. Under its programme of safety standards the Agency was preparing a set of internationally agreed recommendations on nuclear power station safety, and he was gratified to note that good progress was being made in that work.

120. Against the background of the rapid expansion of the nuclear industry the reprocessing of radioactive wastes was becoming a pressing problem, calling for immediate solution. His delegation likewise supported the Agency's efforts in that direction.

121. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also approved the work of the International Nuclear Information System (INIS), as was attested by his Government's decision to become a member of the System.

122. Increased technical assistance was of vital significance for nuclear activities in the developing countries. Recent measures taken to increase the effectiveness of technical assistance included the promotion of long-term projects and better utilization of available currencies.

123. His delegation was pleased to note that the target for the General Fund, the main source of financing technical assistance, had been raised in 1980 to \$10.5 million, and he promised prompt payment of his country's contribution.

124. He reported that during the past year his country had achieved substantial success in various aspects of fulfilment of the second Seven-Year Plan, particularly as regards politics, economics and culture.

125. The needs of a continually expanding socialist structure of society also included scientific research on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. There were at present in progress in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea research projects concerned with almost all branches of nuclear science, including nuclear physics, radiochemistry, nuclear electronics, the use of radioisotopes, etc. The utilization of nuclear techniques in many parts of the national economy likewise called for the training of qualified staff.

126. He was unable to avoid drawing the Conference's attention to the fact that, in spite of the hopes and wishes of the entire Korean people for détente and for the reunification of their divided country, a very tense situation still prevailed in the Korean peninsula. Everyone knew that, following the unanimous demand by all peace-loving peoples, the 30th session of the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from southern Korea and the establishment of conditions favourable for the peaceful reunification of the whole country. However, four years had passed since then and American troops, far from having been withdrawn from southern Korea, had been reinforced there. During the recent period the United States of America had been continually bringing nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction into southern Korea, in contradiction of the ideals of the IAEA with regard to the peaceful utilization of atomic energy.

127. Expressing the hope that peace-loving Governments and nations would continue to support the just cause of his people in its efforts to ensure the withdrawal of American forces and nuclear weapons from southern Korea, he concluded by assuring the Conference of his country's deep interest in the work of the IAEA and its sincere wishes for the success of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.