



GC

International Atomic Energy Agency

# GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(XXXV)/OR.336  
30 October 1991

GENERAL Distr.

Original: ENGLISH

## THIRTY-FIFTH (1991) REGULAR SESSION

### RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Neue Hofburg, Vienna  
on Tuesday, 17 September 1991, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. SANTANA CARVALHO (Brazil)  
later: Mr. AAMODT (Norway)

### CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
7	General debate and annual report for 1990 (continued)	1 - 163
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Ukraine	1 - 23
	Netherlands	24 - 42
	Tunisia	43 - 48
	Uruguay	49 - 56
	Algeria	57 - 85
	Yugoslavia	86 - 90
	Mexico	91 - 104
	Canada	105 - 111
	Poland	112 - 132
	Belgium	133 - 143
	Zimbabwe	144 - 153
	Commission of the European Communities	154 - 163

[\*] GC(XXXV)/982.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(XXXV)/INF/301/Rev.2.

Abbreviations used in this record

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
ECU	European currency unit
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
IPERS	International Peer Review Service
MERCOSUR	South American Common Market
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
RAPAT	Radiation Protection Advisory Team
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TACF	Technical Assistance and Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
US \$	United States dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WAMAP	Waste Management Advisory Programme
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (Soviet Union)

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1990 (GC(XXXV)/953) (continued)

1. Mr. VYSHNEVSKY (Ukraine) welcomed the Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Yemen as new Members of the Agency and assured them of his delegation's full co-operation in all aspects of the Agency's activities.
2. The present session of the General Conference was taking place at a time of radical change throughout the world, with the Governments of many countries actively seeking to strengthen international co-operation in matters of vital importance to mankind. Evidence of the new atmosphere of global responsibility was the recent historic signing of a strategic arms reduction treaty by the Soviet Union and the United States of America, which his delegation acclaimed as an important step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world characterized by the non-use of violence for settling problems, the quest for mutually acceptable solutions, and collective efforts to develop democracy and raise the living standards of the peoples of the world. Ukraine, for its part, pursuant to the provisions of its Declaration of Sovereignty and Act of Proclamation of Independence, intended to maintain a policy of strict neutrality, non-membership of military blocs, and adherence to the three non-nuclear principles - not to produce nuclear weapons, not to acquire them, and not to allow them on its territory.
3. In that context, he welcomed the accession to the NPT of South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as the declarations of China and France that they had decided, in principle, to accede to the Treaty. His delegation favoured the strengthening and further development of the NPT regime, with the Agency playing a major role, and endorsed the appeal for the NPT to be made a universal legal instrument.
4. His delegation noted with satisfaction the strengthening of co-operation between his country's institutions and the Agency in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It believed that the current international situation was conducive to the Agency's achieving its statutory objectives, and a great deal had already been accomplished in that direction, although much still remained to be done.

5. The Agency's Annual Report for 1990 presented a serious analysis of the results of all the Agency's activities, which overall deserved positive appraisal. A logical continuation of the Agency's work had been the convening in Vienna of the International Conference on the Safety of Nuclear Power, where matters of nuclear safety about which it was desirable to come to agreement at international level had been considered and recommendations had been formulated with a view to ensuring optimum safety levels for present and future generations of nuclear power plants, including proposals for Agency action in that area. It had been the first time that problems crucial to the future development of nuclear power had been discussed at such a high level in the light of all the relevant scientific, technical, economic, ecological and socio-political aspects. The Conference had shown that, provided there was a high level of safety, nuclear power had definite advantages over other sources of energy.

6. In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly had adopted by consensus resolution 45/190 on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant; that resolution reflected the worldwide concern to pool efforts and mobilize the world's potential in dealing with the long-term consequences of the disaster. His delegation was grateful to the United Nations Co-ordinator for Chernobyl and Director-General of UNOV, Ms. Anstee, for undertaking to implement the provisions of the resolution, including the drawing-up of a plan to combine the efforts of all the international organizations involved in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. His Government was eager to co-operate with the international organizations, and in particular the Agency, in carrying out the plan.

7. In that context, he wished to remind the Conference that, on 20 September in New York, there would be a pledging conference for contributions to the United Nations Chernobyl programme. His delegation hoped that the appeal from the United Nations and from the Governments whose territories contained areas afflicted by the disaster would meet with generous support from the Agency's Member States.

8. His country felt keenly the tragedy which had taken place at Chernobyl in April 1986, bringing suffering to many millions of people. Although the Government was carrying out a broad range of measures to deal with the consequences, the situation in the affected areas continued to be extremely difficult. International assistance had been offered in the form of efforts to determine how best to mitigate the effects of the disaster. In September 1990, the Chernobyl Centre for International Research had been set up, and over 20 countries and 4 international organizations had declared their willingness to participate. An agreement had been signed between the Governments of the USSR, Ukraine and the Byelorussian SSR on the one hand, and the Agency on the other, for international research to be conducted at the "Pripyat" scientific centre, and the International Chernobyl Project to assess the radiological consequences of the accident had been launched.

9. In evaluating the radiological situation in a number of afflicted areas and formulating recommendations regarding radiation protection and human health, the international experts had made a valuable contribution. However, because of the limited scope of the Project, no provision had been made for evaluating the health of the inhabitants of the 30-kilometre zone who had been evacuated immediately following the accident, or the population living in the worst-affected areas, or of the members of the cleanup teams, the so-called "liquidators".

10. The conclusions of the Project was that the study had been unable to resolve all issues related to potential health consequences, and indeed his delegation felt that the study put forward an excessively optimistic view of the future consequences to the health of the population. Unfortunately, medical data showed a considerable increase in the incidence of various diseases over the recent period which might have been caused by the chronic effects of low radiation doses or by the impact of a single occurrence of unfavourable radiological and chemical factors.

11. Accordingly, the work needed to continue, with particular attention being given to the medical study of the population living in the worst-affected areas, so that, on the basis of a multifactor analysis, reliable data concerning the health status of the population could be obtained and

recommendations drawn up for improving it. A sound forecast of future trends was needed, and his delegation noted with satisfaction the Director General's announcement in his opening statement that the Agency was ready to move in that direction. The Ukrainian Government, for its part, would co-operate to the utmost in implementing such a study and make available for that purpose all the information and equipment at its disposal.

12. Such an undertaking would be fully in line with the spirit of the measures proposed by the Agency for strengthening international co-operation in matters relating to nuclear safety and radiological protection. Given that another major accident at any nuclear power plant would undoubtedly discredit the very idea of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Agency was fully justified in attempting to elaborate basic nuclear safety principles and to set up a co-ordinated programme for co-operation, which might even include the establishment of an international centre for nuclear safety on whose services all countries could draw. Only a concerted international policy could ensure the highest levels of safety worldwide and dispel the misgivings aroused by nuclear power.

13. Chernobyl was the site of a great tragedy, but it also constituted a unique testing ground for the study of important physical, technical, biological and social problems arising in the aftermath of a nuclear accident and for resolving the problem of assuring the radiation protection of the population. No less important was the problem of the final disposal of large volumes of radioactive waste resulting from the accident. His delegation was convinced of the need for an international project under which optimum methods for the processing and disposal of radioactive waste could be developed and then made available to all countries.

14. Thus, the copious information resulting from the various Chernobyl-related projects would become common property and could be of great help in raising safety levels and working out measures to minimize the consequences of extremely improbable, but unfortunately still possible, future accidents at nuclear power plants.

15. In his country, the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection was not a mere abstraction, but part of the harsh daily lives of many hundreds of thousands of people, who had suffered from a nuclear accident ranked at

level 7, the highest level on the International Nuclear Event Scale. As a result, his country had been paying special attention over the past few years to the particularly important areas of operational safety and the Agency's OSART missions.

16. On the territory of Ukraine, there were currently five large nuclear power stations, the Chernobyl, Rovno, (visited by an OSART team in June 1990), Zaporozhe, Khmel'nitskij and South Ukrainian stations. Between them they comprised 16 reactors with a total capacity of 15 000 MW, accounting for approximately 25% of all electric power generated in the Republic. The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine had recently adopted a measure transferring to Ukrainian jurisdiction all State enterprises and organizations previously under All-Union jurisdiction situated within the territory of the Republic. That decision applied to all five nuclear power stations, as well as to a number of other installations. Clearly, the transfer must not in any way affect the safe operation of the facilities. A certain amount of time would be required to resolve a number of legal, organizational and other matters that had arisen following the Ukrainian Parliament's decision. Appropriate structures were being set up that would ultimately regulate the activities of Ukraine's national nuclear industry. In particular, a Ukrainian State Committee for the safe operation of nuclear power plants had already been established.

17. His delegation wished to emphasize that, despite the serious opposition to the development of nuclear power which now existed in Ukraine - largely as a result of the "Chernobyl syndrome" - his country could not conceive of its future economic development as a sovereign State without nuclear power plants.

18. Turning to the subject of safeguards, he expressed his delegation's appreciation for the Agency's verification activities, which were taking on greater importance as the world moved into an age of nuclear disarmament. At the same time, the example of Iraq showed the need to increase the effectiveness of the present system of safeguards. The Agency's programme and budget for 1993-94 should provide for the practical implementation of a system of special inspections, and define clearly the mechanism for carrying them out.

19. His delegation also endorsed the Agency's efforts to implement Security Council resolution 687 concerning the monitoring of Iraq's nuclear activities. It was in favour of giving fresh impetus to the idea of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and of continuing efforts to bring all countries in the region into the NPT regime and to have them place their nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards.

20. In the opinion of his delegation, the Agency's budget for 1992 was, on the whole, well-balanced. However, for future years there was a need to conduct a comparative analysis of the results of the Agency's various projects in order to establish an order of priority for them, thus ensuring that expenditure on the most important projects could be increased as necessary, and the financing of less vital projects cut accordingly. Such flexibility in financial planning could considerably enhance the effectiveness of the Agency's work.

21. Such an analysis was even more essential where the Agency's Medium-Term Plan for the period 1993-98 was concerned. The Plan needed to provide for the possibility of re-allocating resources in accordance with changing priorities and should serve as a guide in the formulation of subsequent years' programmes, so it must be periodically re-examined and updated on the basis of consultations between the Agency's Secretariat and Member States.

22. In conclusion, he reiterated his country's great appreciation and support for the Agency's multi-faceted activities in strengthening international co-operation in matters concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and promised that Ukraine, as a Member State, would do everything in its power to help accomplish the important tasks confronting the Agency.

23. Mr. PLUG (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the previous year had witnessed important events which had affected, and would continue to affect, the work of the Agency.

24. The European Community and its 12 member States were gravely concerned about the reports by the Director General that Iraq had failed to comply with its obligations under its safeguards agreement with the Agency and under Security Council resolution 687, which called upon Iraq to declare all its

nuclear activities to the Agency. The nuclear activities concealed by Iraq were of such a nature and scale, the Iraqi attempts to keep them secret so elaborate, and the cost so much in excess of the economic benefits that it was clear that the programme had not been for purely peaceful purposes. The Twelve were pleased that the Agency had played such a prominent and skilful role in the implementation of Security Council resolution 687 and supported the Director General in those efforts, while deploring the way in which the Agency inspection teams had been deceived and obstructed in carrying out the Security Council's mandate. The European Community and its member States condemned Iraq's non-compliance with its NPT safeguards agreement and called upon it to remedy that situation unconditionally, swiftly and with no further circumvention, in accordance with the relevant provisions of its safeguards agreement with the Agency, with the resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors and the Security Council on Iraq's violation of its commitments, and with the Board's conclusions the previous week.

25. Following France's decision to accede to the NPT, the objectives of which that country had always supported, all member States of the European Community would soon be formal Parties to the Treaty, which constituted a cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. The Agency and its safeguards system played a key role in upholding the Treaty by improving confidence and mutual trust between nations and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Current efforts by the Agency's Secretariat, under the guidance of the Board of Governors, to strengthen and update its safeguards system were to be commended. In line with the valuable suggestions to that end offered by the Director General, the Twelve had, as a first step, proposed a set of relatively straightforward measures which could be implemented fairly quickly. Those measures ought to include:

- An obligation for States to declare any new facilities to the Agency at least 180 days before the start of construction work;
- An obligation to declare all civil nuclear materials, including uranium ore concentrate (yellow cake), produced in the territory of a State;

- Effective use by the Agency of special inspections, including their use in relation to undeclared nuclear facilities;
- The setting up by the Agency of a universal register of exports and imports of sensitive nuclear equipment and, at the discretion of the Agency, verification that:
  - (i) Such equipment was actually located in a safeguarded facility;
  - (ii) All nuclear materials processed in that facility were effectively safeguarded;
- An obligation for the Secretariat to notify the Board of Governors of any request for exemption under the terms of Articles 36 and 37 of an INFCIRC/153-type agreement before acceding to such a request.

The Twelve were gratified that the Board of Governors had taken up those proposals and that the Agency would examine them urgently, together with Member States and the Community, giving consideration also to their likely cost and benefits. The Twelve looked forward to fruitful and conclusive discussions on those proposals in the Board of Governors in February 1992.

26. The Twelve welcomed the accession of additional States to the NPT. The announcement by China that it had decided to join the Treaty illustrated the extent to which non-proliferation had become a universal objective. Albania, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia also deserved to be commended on having become Parties since the previous session of the General Conference. The accession of four African States contributed to the prospect of a nuclear-weapon-free Africa. The Twelve also noted with satisfaction the recent signing by South Africa of a safeguards agreement with the Agency. Positive developments in other parts of the world, as exemplified by the Guadalajara agreement between Argentina and Brazil concluded the previous July, also provided positive encouragement. The European Community and its member States were confident that the negotiations between Argentina, Brazil and the Agency on a comprehensive safeguards agreement would soon be completed and the agreement put into force, thus preparing the ground for a broadening of the scope of the Tlatelolco Treaty. Recent developments in the Middle East, notably the joint initiative by several Arab States during the current session of the General Conference and the prospect of negotiations between all the

parties involved, might eventually result in a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region too, supported by full-scope Agency safeguards in all the States concerned. It was to be hoped that similar initiatives would develop and succeed on the South Asian subcontinent. The Twelve were concerned about the long delays in concluding and implementing a safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and hoped that, following the Board's approval of the text of the agreement the previous week, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would ensure the swift and unconditional entry into force and implementation of the agreement.

27. For the European Community and its member States, largely dependent as they were on external sources of supply, recourse to a diversity of energy options was imperative and would probably remain so in the foreseeable future. The choice of nuclear power was an important element of the energy strategy of several Member States. At the same time, governments and public opinion worldwide had become increasingly aware of how energy production affected health, safety and the environment. Governments were faced with the difficult task of reconciling environmental challenges, security of supply and economic competitiveness. In that respect the Twelve took note of the outcome of the Helsinki Symposium on Electricity and the Environment.

28. While the nuclear energy option had the advantage of not producing the gases which contributed to global warming and acid rain, its deployment raised certain issues, specifically those of nuclear safety and nuclear waste disposal. The Agency was the forum par excellence for global discussion of those matters and that was why the Twelve had taken the initiative the previous year of proposing an international conference to evaluate the safety of nuclear power generation and to discuss possible strategies for the future. The Twelve were gratified to note that the International Conference on the Safety of Nuclear Power, held from 2 to 6 September, had succeeded in presenting a thorough evaluation of all the major issues and in formulating recommendations which could make an important contribution to the future course of developments in that field. The Community and its member States also welcomed the recommendations made by the Board of Governors the previous week in favour of embarking on the step-by-step approach towards an international nuclear safety convention, as recommended by the International

Safety Conference, and of inviting the Director General to incorporate the Conference's other valuable recommendations into the Agency's Medium-Term Plan and its work programme for the coming biennium. The Community and its member States were firmly resolved to provide maximum assistance in those endeavours.

29. The Twelve had noted with active interest the report of the International Chernobyl Project, the conclusions and recommendations of which could help provide guidelines for follow-up research and projects aimed at improving living conditions for the people in the contaminated area. The European Community and its member States, as well as private organizations and individuals, had already contributed to endeavours of that nature, for example in the framework of the Chernobyl Centre for International Research, and every effort would be made to continue those endeavours.

30. The accident at Chernobyl had provided clear evidence of the very serious damage such accidents could cause and the severe impact they could have on society and the environment. The prevention of such accidents was obviously a high priority. In developing co-operation between the European Community, the Central and Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union in the fields of energy and the environment, nuclear safety had been identified as one of the main concerns. The Agency's activities relating to the safety of older reactors constituted a recent example of such co-operation. The Twelve had participated in expert missions and studies under the project on the safety of WWER-440/230 reactors in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Following an appeal by the Bulgarian Government, the Community and several of its member States, together with the IAEA and WANO, had decided to provide immediate financial and technical assistance to help Bulgaria improve safety conditions at Kozloduy.

31. The adoption of a European Energy Charter with a Protocol on nuclear energy, including nuclear safety, provided additional opportunities for comprehensive co-operation with the Central and Eastern European countries. Preparatory work was well under way and a ministerial conference had been scheduled for the end of the year in The Hague. The Director General was invited to participate in that work and to detail the valuable contributions the Agency could make.

32. Another issue of great importance affecting the public's attitude to nuclear power was the international regime for liability in respect of damage caused by nuclear accidents. Preparations for the revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage were progressing, although several complicated issues remained to be solved. The Twelve anticipated that the work of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage would lead to a revision conference, to be held as soon as was feasible.

33. On 6 September the European Community and its member States had simultaneously deposited their instruments of ratification for the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Practical experience in the day-to-day implementation of the provisions of the Convention by national authorities and the European Commission had been gained. The Review Conference of the Convention, foreseen for 1992, would provide a timely opportunity to evaluate that practice and discuss possible improvements. The Twelve intended to be actively involved in the preparations for the Conference starting on 7 October.

34. As expressed in the Declarations by the European Council in Dublin the preceding year and more recently in Luxembourg in June of the current year, the European Community and its member States attached the greatest importance to maintaining an effective international nuclear non-proliferation regime and would make every effort to contribute to strengthening non-proliferation and encouraging the participation of further countries in the regime. They were convinced of the need for the peaceful application of nuclear energy to take place under credible, effective and efficient international safeguards. Their long-standing commitment to those principles was best illustrated by the establishment, as early as 1957, of the EURATOM Treaty, with its principle of supranational responsibility for applying safeguards to the use of nuclear energy within the Community.

35. Turning to financial matters and the concern over the Agency's recurring cash crises, caused by late payment or non-payment of obligatory contributions to the Regular Budget and of pledged contributions to the TACF, he appealed to all Member States which were in arrears to remedy that situation so that the Agency could fulfil its designated tasks under the Statute.

36. The Twelve were also concerned about the somewhat frustrating debate on the financing of safeguards and urged that a long-term solution be found which would uphold the principle that safeguards benefited all countries and that their cost should therefore be borne by all Member States.

37. The Agency's activities in the field of scientific and technical assistance and co-operation formed an integral part of its mandate. The European Community and its member States had always accorded high priority to those activities and the steady increase in resources over the past ten years amply reflected the interest of Member States. However, it seemed worth pointing out that improvement of the safeguards system would facilitate more enhanced forms of assistance and co-operation.

38. The time had come to discuss new targets for the TACF. It was essential that the targets be realistic in terms of Member States' ability and willingness to pledge and to pay. In recent years there had been a decrease both in the number of pledges and in the level of pledges actually paid. An effort should be made to reverse that trend, since the quality of programming and implementation of technical co-operation activities depended heavily on the predictability and reliability of pledges.

39. The preceding year had seen many important political events. The Twelve warmly welcomed the Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Republic of Yemen as new Members of the Agency. There were many areas in which promising developments were occurring that seemed likely to have a positive influence on the work of the Agency, and the Twelve pledged their full support for such steps forward.

40. Finally, turning to his own country's nuclear programme, he said that nuclear power played a modest role in the Netherlands, which had two nuclear power plants generating approximately 6% of national electricity production. Recently, following the practical advice and recommendations of several OSART and IPERS missions, decisions had been taken to extend the operational lifetime of both reactors.

41. As a result of the Chernobyl accident, no decision on the construction of new nuclear power plants was expected before 1993. The nuclear option would be kept open in the meantime by maintaining nuclear know-how and

infrastructure and by a four-year nuclear safety research programme focusing on advanced reactor concepts, especially those with enhanced natural safety features. Special attention was being given to reactor concepts which were expected to become commercial within a few years. Thus, the Netherlands was participating in development of the Simplified Boiling Water Reactor. A comparison of other advanced reactor concepts was being made with a view to possible participation in a second reactor, perhaps of the "inherently safe" type. To improve his country's understanding of new reactor types, an assessment of evolutionary and revolutionary reactor concepts had been undertaken with the assistance of Agency experts.

42. The Netherlands continued to attach great importance to radioactive waste research. In 1989 it had been provisionally concluded that final disposal of radioactive waste in salt rock formations was feasible from the technical and safety point of view, but that additional verification was required. A follow-up desk research programme was focusing on final disposal safety, with attention also being given to new safety-related topics such as retrievability of waste and direct disposal of irradiated fuel elements, and with increased attention being given to actinide research. Results of that follow-up radioactive waste research programme would be available by approximately 1994.

43. Mr. AMMAR (Tunisia) joined other speakers in welcoming Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Yemen as new Member States and expressed his conviction that they would make a valuable contribution to the Agency's work in the service of peace and development.

44. Having had the honour of being a member of the Board of Governors for the past two years, Tunisia highly appreciated the spirit of co-operation manifested in that body, and noted that the Agency could not but be directly affected by the recent changes in international affairs which were having so great an impact in all fields.

45. The expansion of the NPT with the accession of new States and the increase in Agency safeguards activities to protect mankind from the dangers of nuclear energy were particularly welcome. However, more efforts should be made to promote the use of nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind.

46. There were still problems associated with the use of nuclear energy, such as the disposal of radioactive waste and its impact on the environment. The existing measures in that area would continue to be ineffective unless supported by international conventions. Efforts made by the Agency to promote international co-operation in the areas of nuclear safety, radiation protection and the prevention of nuclear accidents had led to tangible progress, attributable to the readiness shown by various States to join in those efforts. However, while it was encouraging that the new States having significant nuclear programmes which were emerging as a result of political developments in Eastern Europe had given assurances that they would seek to abide by the Agency's safety standards and guidelines, it was clear that additional responsibilities would arise there for the Agency. Moreover, the fact that some nuclear facilities in that region lacked the required degree of safety was cause for serious concern, and his delegation hoped that all States would maintain a suitable degree of transparency in their relations with the Agency so that it could carry out the appropriate evaluations.

47. With regard to the Agency's technical assistance activities, developing countries attached great importance to the promotion of co-operation with the Agency. For its part, Tunisia was grateful to the Agency for the expert services which it had provided in areas such as pest control, the eradication of the New World screwworm and desalination projects in North Africa.

48. Finally, his delegation regretted the fact that, at a time of positive developments in the area of disarmament and arms control, Israel continued to reject international decisions and to obstruct the international community's efforts to establish peace in the Middle East.

49. Mr. CERSOSIMO (Uruguay) said that the new climate in international relations was turning away from confrontation towards fostering and strengthening international organizations as the most rational and equitable forums for dealing with topics of universal concern. The particular aim of the current session of the General Conference was to promote universal confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as international co-operation in the field of nuclear science and technology.

50. His country was co-ordinating its activities with those of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil in order to meet the requirements of the new strategy of regional integration represented by MERCOSUR. To that end, national expertise in the various countries needed to be harmonized and co-ordinated, and indeed that was the guiding principle of all his country's nuclear activities. The public and private sectors were now being integrated and were working in conjunction with the educational centres using atomic energy. Nuclear assistance and co-operation agreements had been signed with Argentina and Chile, and a programme was in the pipeline with those countries for joint scientific and technical activities. A co-operation agreement had also been signed with Canada for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and efforts were being made to conclude a nuclear co-operation agreement with Brazil.

51. The decision by Brazil and Argentina in favour of the peaceful use of nuclear energy was welcome, for it meant that those two countries could soon become parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty. Nuclear energy could be put to either peaceful or military uses; which option was chosen was determined by the political will of each individual country. However, at certain levels of nuclear development, when States possessed so-called sensitive technologies, the distinctions between the two options narrowed. Therefore, the will to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes must be stated with conviction so that no doubts subsisted, within the overall context of confidence-building measures in the pursuit of peace as the guiding principle. Although the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty played a vital role in that process, they were not the only instruments. There were also other forms of agreements permitting the verification of compliance with commitments to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the Agency, through its safeguards system, played a key role in that respect. He appealed to other countries to become parties to a system whereby effective safeguards could be applied to their nuclear installations and materials. In that connection, he strongly condemned the attitude of the Government of Iraq towards the IAEA officials, who had been impeded in the performance of their duties despite the existence of a safeguards agreement.

52. There was no doubt that the key to success in the peaceful use of nuclear energy lay in the promotion of measures for its rational use, with due attention to radiation protection and nuclear safety. Although nuclear technology could generate fears and misgivings, the great social and environmental benefits its peaceful use could provide had been amply demonstrated. On the other hand, it could also present a risk to human health or adversely affect the environment in the event of an accident; even a small nuclear accident would have major repercussions throughout the world. However, the fact remained that 17% of global production of electrical energy came from nuclear power plants and that nuclear technology also brought benefits in the field of medicine, animal health, agriculture and industry.

53. The greatest efforts were required in the fields of radiation protection and nuclear safety, and any measures to that end deserved support, for they would enhance confidence in the benefits to be gained from the application of nuclear technology.

54. Environmental radiation protection was a mechanism for verifying that levels of radioactivity in the environment were normal, and he urged the creation of a co-ordinated system to monitor environmental radioactivity in both normal and abnormal situations and take the requisite remedial measures in the latter. The environment recognized no frontiers and its conservation was essential to the survival of the human race. Conservation of the environment and development should be interdependent and compatible activities. However, before a co-ordinated network to measure environmental radiation at the national, regional and global levels could be set up, an advisory group first needed to be established to report on how such a network could be implemented.

55. Turning to the Agency's technical co-operation activities, he noted that such valuable programmes as ARCAL, RCA and AFRA should receive the necessary financial backing to ensure proper and timely implementation of planning activities at the regional level without the need to call upon financial contributions from the host country as had been the case on the occasion of the VIIIth ARCAL planning and co-ordination meeting held in his country in May 1991. He urged the Director General to give consideration to the best way of organizing that new form of co-operation and to adapt the Agency's system of financing to that end.

56. His country wished to make its contribution to the Agency as in previous years and would pledge a voluntary contribution for 1992. In Uruguay, it was the most downtrodden sections of society which most desperately needed to enjoy the benefits of scientific and technological development, key elements in improving the standard of living. Technology would indubitably be at the centre of future efforts to promote social and economic development and he therefore acclaimed the present session of the General Conference as a milestone in his country's path towards progress and development.

Mr. Aamodt (Norway) took the Chair.

57. Mr. CHERIF (Algeria) observed that since the preceding session of the Conference there had occurred profound changes in the world, which gave rise not only to hopes but also to apprehensions. In the present international situation, all States should strive for peace, the elimination of tensions and mutual co-operation with a view to overcoming the complex problems engendered by the daily upheavals taking place in the political, social, cultural and even technological arenas.

58. It was the duty of all Member States participating in the Conference to work towards realization of the Agency's objectives, namely placing the benefits of the atom at the service of peace and the well-being of mankind as a whole. In a changing world, the Agency's credibility would increasingly depend on how it carried out its statutory function of promoting and accelerating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Constructive consultation and closer co-operation between Member States that took into account the interests of each would not only safeguard the Agency from tensions and conflicts but contribute to the establishment of an international framework ensuring fairness and creating confidence among nations.

59. Thanks to the spirit of voluntary co-operation, the Agency, during the 34 years of its existence, had achieved a great deal in making the benefits of nuclear applications available to most countries. That calm atmosphere must be maintained in the future.

60. The Agency had made strenuous efforts in recent years to revitalize the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially nuclear power. The Annual Report for 1990 gave an idea of the range of the Agency's activities and the progress of its major programmes, confirming its positive role and its ability to meet the serious challenges before it.

61. Algeria wished to express its appreciation of the quality of the assistance received under the technical co-operation programme and of the Secretariat's support in implementing projects.

62. It was needless to point out that the numerous applications of nuclear energy were of the utmost usefulness and were becoming an essential factor in economic and social development. For that reason, national scientific and technological infrastructures must be strengthened in order to allow the widest possible use of nuclear techniques in medicine, agriculture, water management, industry, energy production and research, despite unfavourable economic conditions. In fact, those conditions made it imperative to promote those promising techniques in order to alleviate the effects of recurrent crises and to establish firm bases for development.

63. In Algeria, the highest priority would continue to be attached to health and agriculture, sectors in which the needs were urgent and the results could have social and economic impacts in the short term.

64. In the health sector, 12 nuclear medicine services for diagnosis and therapy and four new cancer radiotherapy centres had been set up; considerable progress had been made in medical physics and in the quality control and production of radiopharmaceuticals. Algeria hoped to meet a large part of its demand for radiopharmaceuticals from local production, thanks to Agency assistance, which would hopefully be stepped up.

65. Agency assistance had also been instrumental in implementing a number of projects relating to agriculture, animal production and hydrology. An industrial irradiator for food preservation and sterilization of medical supplies was to be installed shortly. Nuclear techniques were being used to study the rise in the water-table in some regions of the Sahara, a phenomenon which could be disastrous for the date palm.

66. Research in the nuclear field enabled Algeria to develop capacities and know-how which were useful for the industrial sector. Its nuclear research centres were making their experience and capacities for engineering studies and quality control available to the petroleum, petrochemical, steel and power generation sectors.

67. As for nuclear installations, the Nur research and training reactor, the first in Algeria, had been in operation for two years and was used for training various types of personnel in the nuclear area. It was also utilized for experimental purposes to produce small quantities of radioisotopes.

68. Other activities were being organized gradually, including a programme on neutron beams for materials study and activation analysis, which was receiving Agency assistance.

69. Another research reactor with a capacity of 15 MW was being constructed in co-operation with the People's Republic of China. It was expected to meet the country's radioisotope needs and research requirements. It had been named "Salam" (peace) in honour of Professor Abdus Salam and, at the same time, to symbolize Algeria's commitment to peace and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that connection, he referred in particular to the spirit of mutual confidence and respect which characterized Algeria's co-operation with China under that project.

70. As in the case of the Nur reactor, his Government had informed the Director General of its decision to place the Salam reactor voluntarily under Agency safeguards. For that purpose, it intended unilaterally to begin negotiations with the Agency with a view to concluding a safeguards agreement.

71. Other research and development laboratories in various areas of nuclear science and technology such as nuclear applications, analytical methods, geology, materials science and nuclear fuel were being installed progressively.

72. With regard to regional co-operation, the fact that a large number of African States had within a short time become party to AFRA indicated the interest which that programme had aroused in the region as an instrument for promoting co-operation in the area of nuclear applications.

73. The preliminary results of the AFRA programme in Algeria, which had been reviewed at the meeting of the technical working group in July, were encouraging, and accordingly Algeria was striving hard to create the necessary conditions for implementing all the projects.

74. Under the AFRA regional agreement, apart from the projects financed by the Agency, namely two workshops held in Algiers in May 1991 and several training courses, only one project had been awarded a grant of US \$100 000 from the French Government. Obviously the objectives could not be met without extrabudgetary funding and greater financial support from the Agency. It would therefore be desirable for other donors to follow France's example.

75. He commended the Secretariat and especially the staff of the Department of Technical Co-operation for their constant and effective support for the AFRA programme. Moreover, Algeria highly appreciated the valuable assistance provided by the Agency under projects of interest to the Maghreb sub-region - those on nuclear desalination, screwworm control and fruit fly eradication. He noted with satisfaction the progress made in the eradication of the New World screwworm in Libya, and hoped that the experience gained there could be used in implementing the sub-regional project on the fruit fly.

76. The Maghreb area suffered from a chronic shortage of drinking water, which was expected to become more acute under the combined effect of diminished rainfall, population growth and increased water requirements for industry and irrigation. Fresh water resources being limited, the conventional methods of water management could not satisfy the rising demand. It was necessary therefore to resort to desalination of sea water, and preliminary studies seemed to indicate that nuclear energy might be the most competitive source of energy for that purpose. In that connection, he praised the competence and speed with which the Secretariat and consultants had carried out part of the work recommended by the General Conference, and expressed the hope that the same tempo would be maintained in the future and that the activity would continue to be accorded due priority in the Agency's programme.

77. The foregoing demonstrated the importance of the Agency's technical assistance as the principal means of extension of nuclear techniques in the world and of reducing the technological disparity between the developed and developing countries. While the Agency had made laudable efforts to improve its programmes, and in particular its resource utilization and implementation rates, it must be pointed out that the financing of technical assistance, unlike other activities, continued to be uncertain because of the voluntary character of the contributions, which were always dependent on the donor countries' political and economic situation. It was essential therefore to establish a financing system which would guarantee assured resources and continuity of the co-operation programmes.

78. Concerning the Medium-Term Plan now under study, he had no doubt that the Agency needed a strategic plan as guidance for its activities and to respond to requirements in the near future. However, such a plan should not envisage activities within a rigid framework but set strategic objectives providing for:

- (i) Elimination of obstacles in the way of developing co-operation in the area of nuclear energy;
- (ii) Establishment of an essential balance between the different activities of the Agency;
- (iii) Consideration of the developing countries' needs in a more effective manner;
- (iv) Financing of technical assistance on the basis of assured, sufficient and predictable resources.

79. In a world concerned about pollution and deterioration of the environment, the Agency must continue to accord high priority in its programmes to nuclear safety and radiological protection, which were a prerequisite for the large-scale use of nuclear energy. Algeria, for its part, attached great importance to those activities and noted with satisfaction that the expanded nuclear safety programme adopted after the Chernobyl accident had had a positive impact not only on the scientific and technological aspects but also on the credibility of nuclear power in the public mind.

80. The work of the recent International Conference on the Safety of Nuclear Power and that of several technical groups on the subject indicated the range of the tasks that lay ahead. He hoped that efforts would be intensified in the future in order to arrive at a long-term global programme of action which would cover all aspects related to the safe utilization of nuclear energy and be of benefit to all Member States.

81. Algeria intended to participate more actively in those endeavours and to seek the Agency's services more extensively in the areas of radiation protection, safety and waste management. In that connection, a WAMAP mission was to visit Algeria by the end of the year and other expert services would be requested at a later stage.

82. His country continued to support the Agency's safeguards system, which was an important element in a global approach to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and a valuable confidence-building measure. However, his delegation considered that, to enjoy strong international support, the system should be applied with due regard for the sovereignty of Member States and on a non-discriminatory basis. For safeguards to be credible it was also necessary that the suppliers of nuclear technology should be willing to help other countries to acquire the know-how they needed in that area. A climate of confidence and co-operation between all Member States would then be created.

83. Furthermore, in view of its political dimensions, the effectiveness of safeguards would depend more on the improvement of the world situation in the future.

84. The burdens and restraints of inspection activities must be evaluated in the light of those considerations, keeping in mind that the already high cost of those activities must not become unbearable for the Agency and that a necessary balance should be struck between the different activities. In that regard, he wished to stress that the financing of safeguards ought to be provided mainly by developed Member States with large nuclear programmes.

85. In conclusion, Algeria wished to reaffirm its adherence to the Agency's objectives, the realization of which would undoubtedly help create a world characterized by confidence and solidarity, a world which sought freedom, well-being and prosperity for all. He was confident that the Agency would, as in the past, find effective ways of pursuing those objectives.

86. Mr. BRNELIC (Yugoslavia) noted that the positive social, political and economic changes taking place in the world as a whole did not preclude uncertainties and the possibility of retrogressive trends in particular areas. Threats of local and regional conflict had not yet been averted and hardly any part of Europe was immune from the disturbing rise of extreme forms of nationalism and intolerance. The main concern of responsible political factors in Yugoslavia was to put an end to the devastating war currently being waged there and to determine the principles for the future organization of the country through negotiations respecting the legitimate interests and aspirations of all its peoples and citizens.

87. Yugoslavia broadly supported the Agency, its safeguards system, its technical co-operation programme and its work in the field of nuclear safety and was confident that the Agency's role in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes would be further extended. As was noted in the Agency's Annual Report for 1990, Yugoslavia had participated in a number of important projects and in courses and seminars sponsored by the Agency. In particular, the Agency had provided valuable assistance to projects related to the construction of cyclotrons at Vinca and Zagreb.

88. The Agency had a vital role to play in implementing the conclusions of the Fourth NPT Review Conference. International co-operation in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology was an integral part of the non-proliferation regime. Such co-operation should be subject to Agency safeguards on a non-discriminatory basis so that the proliferation of nuclear weapons could be effectively prevented. Yugoslavia strongly objected to any restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technologies and insisted on the extension of such co-operation to areas such as the environment and the prevention of dumping of radioactive waste in developing countries. In that context, it favoured extensive financial support by nuclear-weapon States and other developed countries to encourage peaceful uses of nuclear technologies and nuclear energy in non-nuclear-weapon States. Concerted efforts should be made to use the positive trends in international relations to strengthen the credibility and universality of the NPT. In that context, his delegation welcomed the announced intention of China and France to accede to the Treaty.

89. The Agency's activities to improve and develop legal regulations, norms and standards related to nuclear safety and radiation protection, safe operation of nuclear power plants, radioactive waste disposal, handling of nuclear equipment and management of nuclear material should be promoted further. His country had acceded to most international conventions, having recently ratified the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. It noted with interest the recent proposal regarding the possible elaboration of a draft convention on the safety of nuclear power plants and thought that idea should be studied further with a view to finding an integrated international approach to all aspects of nuclear safety which could be adopted by all governments. Also, the recent International Safety Conference had provided an opportunity to start active co-operation at international level with a view to defining a nuclear safety strategy for the future.

90. Yugoslavia attached special importance to the financing of technical co-operation and in its opinion that issue, as well as that of the financing of safeguards, should be kept under review. Generally acceptable solutions had to be found which took into account the limited financial capacities of developing countries. Although Yugoslavia had not been able to pay all its outstanding contributions to the Agency before the current session of the General Conference, owing to the financial difficulties it faced, it would do so as soon as possible since it valued its co-operation with the Agency highly.

91. Mr. ANGUIANO ROCH (Mexico) welcomed as new Members of the Agency the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Yemen, and extended to those countries his Government's best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous future in which they would be able to exercise fully their sovereign rights.

92. The Agency had so far played a decisive role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy within a safe context while at the same time ensuring that such energy was not used for military purposes. With international relations in a state of flux, the Agency now needed to engage in a serious review of its role in general and of its mechanisms for implementing safeguards, formulating policy and setting standards in particular, all with a view to promoting the development and modernization of the majority of its Member States.

93. Mexico was committed to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and was fulfilling its obligations under the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty. It welcomed the accession of Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa to the NPT and was also pleased that France and Zimbabwe would be acceding to it in the near future and that China had decided to do so in principle. As the international community moved towards universality in its membership of the NPT, it seemed worth pointing out that the NPT entailed obligations for both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. In addition to Article III concerning safeguards, it also included Article IV enshrining the inalienable right of all the Parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the obligation of those States in a position to do so to co-operate in promoting the development of the applications of nuclear energy.

94. Exceptional cases of non-compliance with those contractual obligations should not serve in any way as a basis for disturbing that delicate balance or as a pretext for measures violating the sovereign rights of the other Parties.

95. International co-operation was essential in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social progress as well as in strengthening the international safeguards regime and improving nuclear safety. The achievement of all three of those objectives could be furthered through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Mexico accordingly welcomed the recent agreements concluded by Argentina and Brazil, which both strengthened the Tlatelolco Treaty and stimulated Chile's interest in that regional agreement. Another encouraging sign had been the presence of Cuba as an observer at the XIIth General Conference of OPANAL, held in Mexico from 8 to 10 May.

96. A distinguished fellow Mexican, Alfonso García Robles, had died only a few days previously. García Robles, who had shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Alva Myrdal in 1982, had also been one of the pioneering spirits behind the Tlatelolco Treaty as well as a staunch and articulate defender of NPT. The finest tribute that could be paid to him would be to highlight the progress made in both international treaties towards full implementation and universality.

97. Such progress also strengthened the Agency, to which his Government wished to renew its pledge of full participation. With the support of its regional group, Mexico was hoping to take up a seat on the Board of

Governors. It could point to many domestic accomplishments in the nuclear sphere to support its candidacy, one example being the high productivity of Unit 1 of the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant. Since July 1990, when it had been commissioned, the unit had delivered over 4% of Mexico's electricity production.

98. In other fields such as medicine, agriculture and hydrology, Mexico had attained a level of development on a par with that of other countries in the region, as demonstrated by the 32 technical co-operation projects being conducted with the Agency, some with extrabudgetary funds provided by various Member States, and by the ARCAL projects in which it was also involved. In connection with the latter, he pointed out the great success achieved in Mexico under the ARCAL XIV programme to eradicate the medfly and the fruit fly.

99. Regarding some other areas of science and technology, such as the reprocessing of irradiated fuel and radioactive waste management, Mexico had expressed its interest in participating in technical committees and consultants' meetings and hoped that the Secretariat would offer opportunities to interested members to become even more involved in such activities.

100. Mexico welcomed the substantial increase in the implementation rate for technical co-operation in the second year of the biennium and noted that Latin America and the Caribbean had attained the highest rate of all the regions. Significant progress had been achieved in all the technical co-operation projects in which Mexico had participated. Unfortunately, although the indicative planning figures still showed a steady annual increase, pledged contributions to the TACF had decreased drastically. Even more disappointing was the fact that by the previous week only 60% of the pledged contributions had actually been paid.

101. His country was fully committed to the safeguards system, which was so necessary for mankind's security and peace of mind. However, the indiscriminate expansion of the scope of safeguards implied unacceptably high costs. Without prejudicing the efficiency or effectiveness of safeguards, their costs should be reduced by rationalizing the instrumentation required.

102. Mexico welcomed the safeguards agreements concluded with South Africa and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urged the Secretariat to develop innovative ways of ensuring that such new agreements did not lead to a further imbalance in the allocation of Regular Budget funds in favour of safeguards activities.

103. In the field of nuclear safety, his Government was looking forward to studying the report on the recent International Safety Conference and hoped to make its own contribution towards the full implementation of its recommendations. Mexico had spared neither money nor effort to ensure the safety of its domestic nuclear power programme and was confident that the Agency would continue to promote nuclear safety with the help of voluntary contributions and extrabudgetary resources.

104. Mexico was committed to the path of modernization, which it considered the only means of meeting the demands of a growing population in terms of energy, agriculture, industrial production and health care, all areas in which the Agency had a part to play. The developing and industrialized nations should therefore join forces to promote the various peaceful and safe uses of the atom.

105. Mr. LEE (Canada) said that despite the recent progress in nuclear arms reduction, there was still reason for international concern about the serious threat to world peace posed by the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Earlier in the year the Canadian Prime Minister had put forward a non-proliferation initiative aimed at heightening awareness of that threat and making trade in conventional arms more transparent. The recently concluded Group of Seven economic summit had issued a strong call for a greater non-proliferation effort. Recent accessions to the NPT by Zambia, Tanzania and South Africa and the announcements by France, China, Zimbabwe and Namibia of their intention to join the NPT were very welcome. The negotiations on regional safeguards between Argentina and Brazil, in co-operation with the Agency, were also very promising. States that had not yet acceded to the NPT, particularly those with unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, should do so without delay and efforts should be renewed to prevent the kind of breach in the system that had recently occurred in the case of a party to the NPT subject to an INFCIRC/153-type agreement.

106. In Canada's view, the existing non-proliferation regime had operated very effectively within the parameters defined for it. However, it seemed likely that the Agency would have to broaden its activities in some as yet undefined ways as part of an improved non-proliferation regime. In that context, he welcomed the ideas submitted by the Agency's Secretariat on an extended safeguards regime for the Middle East, on special inspections and on safeguards in nuclear-weapon States. The Secretariat had also indicated the necessary priorities and resource requirements.

107. With reference to the Middle East, Canada had always favoured universality in the application of safeguards. The best solution would be if safeguards measures adopted to strengthen the non-proliferation regime as a whole were also acceptable to Middle Eastern countries and could provide credible mutual and international reassurance. Of course, any region could also request the application of additional safeguards measures in view of special circumstances. Any system that strengthened safeguards, improved confidence and security, and enjoyed regional support could be wholeheartedly endorsed by Canada.

108. With reference to special inspections, a careful distinction had to be made between the three different contexts within which that term had been used. Prior to the developments in Iraq the term had been contained in bilateral agreements of Member States as a means of assisting the Agency to safeguard declared nuclear material in circumstances where it was unable to do so effectively for various reasons. Security Council resolution 687(1991) had then provided a new application. Finally, the Agency's Secretariat study suggested yet another interpretation whereby a third country could initiate a special inspection within the framework of existing bilateral agreements.

109. His delegation had already suggested a number of subjects for priority consideration in the Medium-Term Plan, one of those being a review of the safeguards system. That suggestion had originally been prompted by a concern for the financing of safeguards and the seemingly inevitable increase in resources which would be required to support an expanding safeguards programme. The aftermath of the Gulf War and the revelation of Iraq's covert nuclear activities only added greater urgency to the need for such a review.

110. His delegation was pleased to see that the important question of nuclear power and the environment was an issue which was also addressed in the Agency's draft Medium-Term Plan. Since issues of energy and the environment were inextricably linked there was no alternative to an inter-agency intergovernmental approach. His delegation accordingly welcomed the results of the Symposium on Electricity and the Environment held in Helsinki in May by the Agency and a number of other international organizations. The Helsinki symposium had recognized that nuclear power had the potential to make a significant contribution towards a reduction in carbon emissions. If the whole fuel cycle was taken into account, nuclear power would be seen to be cost-competitive, environmentally benign and low-risk in terms of public health and occupational hazards. At the same time, as the report of the Helsinki symposium acknowledged, public acceptance of nuclear power remained a problem. It was therefore important that all energy sources were compared on an equal footing. His Government agreed with the conclusion of the Helsinki report that in order for policy-makers to come to balanced, sound decisions on those important questions, there was a need to establish a comprehensive internationally co-ordinated database on the health and environmental impacts of different energy sources. Canada therefore supported the proposal for the establishment of formalized liaison mechanisms among various international organizations with an interest or role to play in the health, environment and energy sectors. He hoped that the present session of the General Conference would be able to endorse such a conclusion, since it was of the utmost significance in preparing for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

111. One of the necessary ways of building and maintaining public confidence was to have a global record of safe and reliable operation of all existing and planned nuclear facilities, particularly nuclear power plants. The Agency had played and continued to play a valuable role in the promotion of nuclear safety worldwide and Agency programmes which were designed to promote and enhance nuclear power plant safety would continue to receive his country's full support.

112. Mr. ZELAZNY (Poland) said that, despite the serious disturbances witnessed during the year, the speeding up of the processes leading to a new and better world order had continued. Poland hoped that nations would proceed further in that direction, strengthening their co-operation based on partnership within the United Nations system. It welcomed the accession to the Agency of the three Baltic Republics, which had just become independent, and the Republic of Yemen.

113. One of the symptoms of the new age of co-operation was the international solidarity demonstrated in connection with the crisis in the Gulf region. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, had passed a difficult test of effectiveness in action aimed at ensuring respect for international law.

114. It was regrettable that after 20 years of building the nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the NPT, it had been discovered, as a result of Security Council resolution 687(1991), that a State Party to the Treaty was in serious non-compliance with the letter and spirit of the Treaty. The Agency was to be commended on its prompt, responsible and competent action.

115. Poland noted with satisfaction the recent accession to the NPT of South Africa, following Zambia and Tanzania; the positive developments towards the establishment of a regional non-proliferation regime in Latin America; and the declarations by two nuclear-weapon States, France and China, of their intention to accede to the Treaty - all of which added up to a major turning-point in the efforts to establish an effective non-proliferation regime.

116. Last but not least, the Board of Governors had just authorized the Director General to conclude a standard safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in connection with the NPT.

117. Continuing efforts were needed to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and give the NPT a fully universal dimension. The principle of full-scope safeguards should be adopted by all nuclear exporters as a condition for all transfers of nuclear material, equipment and technology to other countries.

118. The present session and the next three sessions of the General Conference should prepare the ground for a successful NPT extension conference in 1995.

119. The three essential areas of the Agency's statutory responsibilities - safeguards, nuclear safety and the transfer of nuclear technology based mainly on technical assistance - guaranteed a stable construction, provided that they were all sufficiently solid. The present session of the General Conference could have a crucial influence on making those pillars really strong.

120. In the first place, Agency safeguards, to be effective and efficient, must be fed with new ideas and supported by new arrangements. Poland would be one of the sponsors of a resolution on that matter to be submitted to the General Conference. Special inspections, universal reporting and early submission of design information, which were closely related, required urgent investigation; and it was time States decided to be more open to Agency safeguards than in the past. The Secretariat should be given a free hand by all Member States in such questions as designation of inspectors and visa requirements or safeguards-friendly design of nuclear facilities.

121. Secondly, regarding safety, the International Safety Conference held recently in Vienna had formulated proposals which should be given serious attention by the General Conference, and the President, in his opening address at the present session, had indicated three primary elements for the future nuclear safety strategy.

122. The first and most important of those elements was the realization of a safety partnership by creating an international safety regime, which would embody a convention permitting Member States to commit themselves legally to observance of the safety fundamentals and safety standards.

123. The General Conference should request the Director General to prepare an outline of the contents of a possible convention on nuclear safety which could then be discussed by the Board in February 1992. The convention should encompass the entire nuclear fuel cycle, including licensing, construction, operation and decommissioning. It would support State regulatory bodies in exercising their duties, but would in no way decrease State responsibility for ensuring the safety of nuclear installations on their territories or under their jurisdiction.

124. The problem of nuclear waste, which remained the focus of public opinion, would have to be adequately tackled in conjunction with the international nuclear safety regime. An international consensus on the safety management and disposal of radioactive waste was essential for the future of nuclear power. The problem was already being given growing attention in the Agency's deliberations and programmes.

125. With regard to the third area of the Agency's responsibility, the technology transfer in non-power as well as power applications of nuclear energy was no less important than the first two and was also an indispensable element of the nuclear order. The Agency's achievements in non-power applications, which were decisive for increasing the quality of life, were unquestionable and should be continued with all necessary support and resources.

126. No Member States should be denied Agency technical assistance provided it was delivered in compliance with the Statute. Poland was grateful for the technical assistance received from the Agency in 1990, which had been used with great effect.

127. The transfer of technology should incorporate assistance to countries on the basis of their engagement in nuclear power. It was necessary, therefore, to develop mechanisms for sponsoring nuclear power where it was economically and ecologically superior to other energy options. Such sponsoring should include, but not be limited to, favourable loan conditions, evaluation of conditions for private capital participation and development of practical investment insurance schemes. The entire complex of practical problems and requirements related to the introduction of nuclear power should be dealt with at special seminars for senior officers designated by interested countries.

128. The Agency was often described as an example of a well-conducted international organization within the United Nations system. Poland recognized its achievements, resulting among other things from the good climate of co-operation within its policy-making organs and from the creative efforts of its Director General and the entire Secretariat. In Poland's opinion, there were four factors that were of extreme importance for the

continuation and perfecting of the Agency's high performance, namely: concentration of the work of policy-making organs on matters of substance; continuity of a competent, sectoral approach in advice given to the Director General; active co-operation with other organizations, based on shared responsibilities; and provision of necessary resources on a regular, foreseeable basis.

129. Poland noted with appreciation the effects of the Agency's increasing co-operation with other international and intergovernmental organizations, which was particularly important in the context of sustainable development. His delegation had decided to join others in sponsoring a draft resolution entitled "The Agency's contribution to sustainable development".

130. Poland was interested in a number of matters, such as the project concerning the safety of WWER-440/230 reactors, and the use of nuclear reactors for the production of potable water, to solve water shortage problems faced by some Member States. Poland also had its own problem of pollution of its two biggest rivers by salt water from deep coal mines. It was estimated that about 1.9 million tonnes of salt originating from deep coal mines were discharged annually, and since that occurred in a region with high air pollution, nuclear energy could be the best method for desalination of the waters.

131. The Polish delegation was ready to accept and support the Secretariat's annual documents GC(XXXV)/952-955, together with the annexed draft resolutions. Those documents were evidence of the Agency's responsiveness to new demands placed upon it by its Member States. In that regard, the Agency's technical assistance programme implementation deserved special mention.

132. In conclusion, he renewed his country's assurance that it would continue, within the limits of its capabilities, both intellectually and financially, to contribute to the success of the Agency's undertakings in its service to its Member States and to the nuclear world order.

Mr. Santana Carvalho (Brazil) resumed the Chair.

133. Mr. VILAIN XIII (Belgium), after remarking on the major changes which had taken place in the international environment in the preceding two years, with both important and positive implications for international institutions, and the Agency in particular, emphasized his country's conviction that current developments showed that there was a greater need than ever for a system of safeguards which was dynamic, effective and credible in the face of the nuclear proliferation threat. Such a system was a vital element in maintaining international order and world security. The sudden disappearance of two-power control, based on a reciprocal nuclear deterrent, and the inherent discipline thereby imposed on the other members of the international community, brought new threats. Some States could embrace a policy of nuclear intimidation or even of threat, as had been dramatically demonstrated in the case of Iraq.

134. It was therefore very timely that the Agency was investigating various ways of improving the efficiency of its safeguards system and that the Board of Governors was to meet the following February to examine concrete priority measures which could be adopted. His country believed that the role of the Agency in international security was becoming more important, and that it was the responsibility of its Members to ensure that it was equipped to fulfil that function. Belgium remained convinced that the universal application of full-scope safeguards was the ultimate aim, and noted with pleasure all progress in that direction. It commended the immense step forward achieved by the accession of South Africa to the NPT, immediately followed by the signing and implementation of a safeguards agreement. It also considered that the much-delayed conclusion of a safeguards agreement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a positive development, but wanted to stress that only a swift and unconditional implementation of that agreement would show that that country was finally fulfilling its international obligations.

135. His delegation strongly supported concentrated efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat in certain regions, which could help to solve major conflicts in those areas. It welcomed and fully supported efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and thought that the overall acceptance of Agency safeguards by all the countries in that region would be a very appropriate way of achieving that aim.

136. Nuclear power contributed more than 60% of Belgium's electricity production. His country therefore considered nuclear safety to be very important. Nuclear power plants were complex installations subjected to a large number of safety regulations in order to safeguard the security and health of the staff and of the population at all times. Advances in know-how, technology and population protection standards made regular revision and updating of installations a necessity.

137. From the regulatory point of view, in Belgium there was an obligatory detailed examination of the design, construction and operating rules of an existing plant in the tenth, twentieth and thirtieth year of operation of a nuclear unit. Current rules in the United States and in Member States of the European Community should serve as the guidelines for that detailed examination.

138. Belgium's first three nuclear power units had been reassessed in 1985. Re-evaluations for the four later units were planned for the period from 1992 to 1995. The extent of the work needed by those reassessments could be illustrated by two figures:

- The three completed units had required 1 600 000 engineering hours, the equivalent of more than 1000 specialized personnel for one year;
- The cost of modifications for the three units came to 6950 million Belgian francs, approximately \$200 million.

In view of those figures, it was essential to consider the Agency's responsibility with regard to OSART mission reports and others. Those missions were useful on condition that their range of application was carefully defined, but it was questionable, as had been emphasized in June 1990, whether the public was aware of that situation. It was vital that the Agency never appear to give the impression of generally guaranteeing the safety of a plant based on the useful, but limited, results of those missions. He noted that his country had considerable accumulated experience which it would like to put to good effect through active international co-operation in the field of nuclear safety and radiological protection.

139. In the framework of programmes established by the European Community for Central and Eastern European countries, Belgium had made senior experts, supported by their respective institutions, available to those countries. Belgium was also giving financial support to some projects in those countries, including taking part in the analysis of tenders for a new nuclear unit in Czechoslovakia.

140. New developments implemented by Belgium had been contained in a report distributed during the International Safety Conference, held in Vienna from 2 to 6 September, which Belgium valued for its high standard and for the relevance of its final recommendations. He noted that Belgium was in favour of the Agency and its Member States proceeding to a joint evaluation of the merits and possible terms of an international convention on safety. Belgium was a recognized authority in the field and was willing to play an active role.

141. The International Safety Conference had considered all aspects of nuclear safety, including the safety objectives for radioactive waste. Belgium was particularly active in the field of radioactive waste management, as shown by the construction of new installations for the storage of vitrified and other wastes from reprocessing of Belgian irradiated fuels, and of a facility called CILVA (Central Infrastructure for Low-Level Waste), due to become operational in 1994, for reprocessing and conditioning of low-level waste.

142. In addition, Belgium was continuing its programme for final storage of highly radioactive waste in an argillaceous formation in the northeast of the country. Operation of a 200 metre deep underground laboratory in that argillaceous formation meant that investigations into real operational conditions could be carried out. With the help of the CEC, the underground installations would be expanded to test for the safe installation of large plants embedded in the layer of clay. Nationals from various countries had been invited to come and study the problems of radioactive waste final storage and its possible effects on the environment.

143. Finally, he reported that his country was taking part in a project in Czechoslovakia to examine a storage site for low- and medium-level radioactive waste. Those various undertakings thus showed the importance Belgium attached to continuing improvement in nuclear safety levels and in international

co-operation in the field of nuclear energy. That position was also supported by the joint declaration made at the beginning of that year by Belgium, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Belgium was fully prepared to lend its expertise to the Agency and to Member States interested in fruitful co-operation.

144. Mr. USHEWOKUNZE (Zimbabwe) commended the Agency for its considerable successes in helping to curb the proliferation of nuclear armaments and to promote nuclear safety and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

145. He was pleased that the Administrative and Budgetary Committee had discussed the issue of payments in non-convertible currencies and welcomed the idea of transferring unutilized amounts from the Administrative Fund to the TACF, a solution which he felt to be most imaginative.

146. The Annual Report for 1990 indicated a gratifyingly large number of RAPAT and WAMAP missions undertaken in the course of the year. Zimbabwe had derived great benefits from such missions, especially with respect to regulatory provisions for the handling, use and disposal of spent radiation sources. Inadequate regulations, monitoring and enforcement in developing countries meant that they were at great risk, a fact often unappreciated by the public, which tended to associate the risk of accidental radiation with reactors only. On the basis of advice from Agency experts, Zimbabwe had substantially revised its regulations to include radiation sources within their scope.

147. Still on the subject of the Agency's commendable progress in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including the campaign to eradicate the New World screwworm from North Africa, he announced that Zimbabwe was in the process of acceding to the NPT and would shortly be depositing the duly signed instruments of accession with the Agency in the hope that the Africa region would gradually move towards becoming a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

148. The Regional Workshop on Project Design, Management and Evaluation held in Ghana that year demonstrated the Agency's active interest in the proper management of projects in the region. More African experts should be used on Agency missions in Africa because of their familiarity with the local

situation, and technical manpower should be given high priority in the organization of projects, especially with regard to equipment maintenance. Wherever possible, local manufacturing capacity should be encouraged to produce the necessary spare parts.

149. Despite the valid arguments, based mainly on considerations of safety, for shifting emphasis away from the nuclear option, it should be remembered that other options also implied problems, for the environment in particular. The developing countries needed safer and simpler reactors as a long-term alternative to fossil fuels, of which there was not an inexhaustible supply.

150. In order to engender public confidence in nuclear technology, its advantages and disadvantages should be publicized in a thoughtful and unsecretive manner. In the case of food irradiation, for example, the public needed to be convinced of the safety and benefits of the process without being placed under pressure. Otherwise, consumer resistance would prevent the expansion of international trade in irradiated foods.

151. He welcomed the signing by the major Powers of various treaties to limit or ban certain categories of nuclear weapons and urged that efforts to rid the world of the threat represented by such weapons should not be allowed to slacken. The massive amounts of money spent on defence could be far more profitably used to alleviate the suffering caused by the present highly inequitable distribution of wealth in the world.

152. Noting that, pursuant to resolution GC(XXXIV)/RES/545, the issue of South Africa's nuclear capabilities was once again on the agenda of the General Conference, he appealed to the international community to maintain its pressure on that country to take further steps towards eliminating apartheid in all its forms. The end to armed conflict in Angola and the encouraging signs of an end to the conflict in Mozambique were bringing relief and hope to the region. Continued progress towards peace would require an atmosphere of trust and tranquillity.

153. Finally, in the environmental sphere, he stressed the need for ever greater vigilance in the face of unscrupulous organizations with no compunction about flouting environmental regulations. As the world's population grew, so did the pressure on the environment. Hence the need to manage it with intelligence and care.

154. Mr. HAMMER (Commission of the European Communities), after joining others in welcoming the new Member States recently admitted to the Agency, recalled that a statement on behalf of the European Community and its Member States had already been made earlier in the meeting by the delegate of the Netherlands. The Commission naturally associated itself fully with that statement.

155. The main aim of the European Community was to move closer towards European integration, not only in economic, but also in political terms. The creation in Europe of a single market was a fundamental part of that process. With a view to progress towards an integrated energy market, the Community's Council of Ministers had recently adopted directives on the transit of electricity and gas within the major Community grids. Completion of the Community's internal energy market also had to be seen in the broader perspective of allowing energy co-operation to take place in geographical Europe as a whole. That was why Community Member States had reacted favourably to the idea of establishing a pan-European energy organization which would bring together the Eastern and Western European countries.

156. The concept of a European Energy Charter had been discussed which would take the form of a code of conduct. A number of specific agreements or protocols would have to be drawn up in order to implement the principles laid down in the Charter for individual energy sectors. The draft protocol on nuclear power, which at present accounted for 35% of the electricity generated within the Community, was expected to place particular stress on plant safety. It was expected that the Charter would be signed by the end of the year.

157. With more specific reference to relations between the Community and the Soviet Union, the assistance agreed upon at the European summit meeting in Rome in December 1990 had already begun. In June, the Council of Ministers had approved ECU 400 million to help finance technical assistance to the Soviet Union. More than a third of that assistance would be devoted to energy and be divided among five specific areas, among which energy saving and nuclear safety were priorities.

158. Meanwhile, co-operation with the Chernobyl Centre for International Research had been established and would provide for scientific contacts with the relevant research institutes. In addition, in July 1991 the European Community had begun negotiations with the Soviet Union aimed at concluding three nuclear co-operation agreements intended to cover controlled nuclear fusion, nuclear safety and trade in nuclear materials.

159. In June, the Commission had adopted the nuclear safety objectives to be pursued in the context of its assistance to the Soviet Union and to Central and Eastern Europe. Recent application of those principles had enabled an urgent technical assistance programme to be launched for the nuclear power plants at Kozloduy in Bulgaria.

160. The conclusions of the recent International Safety Conference held in Vienna represented a milestone in the process of consolidation of the international nuclear safety regime. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Conference had requested the Agency to organize the preparation of a proposal on the necessary elements of a formalized international approach and the Commission was ready to continue its close co-operation with the Agency in that area of special interest for the European Community.

161. The harmonious expansion of civil nuclear power had to be backed by a reliable and strong non-proliferation regime, founded on effective international safeguards. The European Council, at its meeting in Luxembourg in June, had issued a statement of clear support by the Community and its Member States for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and called for universal accession to the NPT. The decisions recently taken by several countries to accede to the NPT were therefore welcomed as a major step towards the achievement of that objective. The keystone of an effective non-proliferation regime was undoubtedly the Agency's safeguards system.

162. As the delegate of the Netherlands had already announced, the instruments of ratification of the International Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material had been simultaneously deposited by the Member States of the European Community and by the Community itself in Vienna on 6 September.

163. Finally, although his statement had centred on the pan-European dimension in the energy field, with special emphasis on nuclear safety which remained a priority concern, he wished to stress that the Community was very ready to co-operate fully with non-member countries in relevant areas of activity.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

