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President: Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(41)/INF/17/Rev.2.

Abbreviations used in this record

ABM Treaty	Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
Agreed Framework	Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SDR	Special drawing right
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor

GENERAL DEBATE AND STATEMENTS MARKING THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AGENCY (continued)  
(GC(41)/8)

1. Mr. KATO (Japan), after welcoming the fact that Malta and Burkina Faso had been approved for membership of the Agency, expressed particular appreciation to Dr. Blix for his dedicated efforts over the past sixteen years to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. The numerous achievements of Dr. Blix's period of office had been the products of energetic work combined with wisdom and effective leadership. He also congratulated Dr. ElBaradei, who would be assuming the post of Director General on 1 December 1997. The Japanese Government was convinced that his excellent qualifications and wide experience of the Agency made Dr. ElBaradei the best person to lead the Agency and continue the work of Dr. Blix.

2. He then read out the following message from the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto: "On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations on the fortieth anniversary of the Agency's establishment. Since its inception, the Agency has succeeded admirably in its efforts to tackle two major undertakings - the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. Japan, maintaining its national policy of limiting the use of nuclear energy to exclusively peaceful purposes, is at the forefront in this field, but its progress in nuclear development and utilization would be unthinkable if it were not for close co-operation with the Agency.

3. "Reviewing the Agency's outstanding achievements, we cannot applaud Dr. Blix sufficiently for his dedication and leadership over the past sixteen years. As Japan promotes nuclear policy, including the nuclear fuel cycle, it has been extremely encouraging that Dr. Blix has led the Agency with a firm belief in the importance of promoting the utilization of nuclear energy. Japan is thus particularly grateful to him.

4. "As mankind faces new challenges such as global environmental and sustainable development issues, the importance of nuclear power as an energy resource will not diminish, but increase, as it offers the advantages of - inter alia - stable supply and low environmental impact. Recognizing the importance of nuclear power, however, does not automatically guarantee a rosy future. Enhancing safety, an essential prerequisite for the promotion of nuclear energy, together with maintaining and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, constitutes a major agenda for us. The Agency's role in this context is paramount, and we look forward to the initiatives to be taken by Dr. ElBaradei in his role as new Director General.

5. "In conclusion, on the occasion of the Agency's fortieth anniversary, I affirm Japan's determination to continue its close co-operation with the Agency under its new Director General."

6. Population growth, improvements in living standards and other factors meant that a continuing increase in world energy demand could be expected. Under those circumstances, his country felt that the members of the international community had a duty to ensure sustainable development while economizing on fossil fuels, given the limited supply and their impact on the global environment. The Third Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, due to be held in Kyoto in December 1997, would be concerned with establishing a new international framework consisting of a set of measures for tackling the problem of global warming beyond the year 2000. Nuclear power would play an important role in that regard. Provided its safety could be ensured, nuclear power was a realistic option offering supply stability and low, greenhouse-gas-free environmental impact.

7. In Japan, the sodium leakage from the Monju prototype fast breeder in December 1995 and the incident at a radioactive waste disposal facility of the Tokai Reprocessing Plant in March 1997 - and the subsequent mishandling of both issues - had increased the public's doubts about the Government's nuclear policy. The Japanese authorities intended to address the situation by strengthening the country's safety culture and through greater transparency. They were working hard to restore public confidence, mainly through a thorough restructuring of the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation, whose safety role would be strengthened and openness vis-à-vis the public increased.

8. As a country with scarce energy resources, Japan attached very great importance to establishing a nuclear fuel cycle which maximized the usefulness of uranium. In accordance with that policy, Japan would continue to develop fast breeders and to use plutonium in light-water reactors. Public understanding and co-operation were indispensable to further progress along that path. It was from that perspective, and bearing in mind the fact that the Agency was the only international organization concerned with all aspects of nuclear energy, that Japan supported the initiatives taken by the Agency in addressing nuclear fuel cycle and public acceptance issues.

9. As the twenty-first century drew nearer, a historic opportunity existed to create a more secure world by promoting global disarmament and upholding nuclear non-proliferation. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) had been adopted and opened for signature at the United Nations General Assembly in September 1996. Banning all nuclear explosions, the CTBT was regarded as a realistic, significant step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan intended to participate very actively in the work of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) as it prepared for the CTBT's implementation. Ratifying the CTBT in July 1997, Japan had been the fourth signatory State to ratify it and was the first of the 42 countries whose ratification was necessary for the CTBT's entry into force to have become a State Party. It hoped that signatory States would ratify the CTBT soon. Meanwhile, it earnestly hoped that those countries which had expressed opposition to the CTBT would reconsider their position in the light of the paramount objective - the promotion of nuclear disarmament.

10. Following the CTBT, the elaboration of a “cut-off treaty” prohibiting the production of weapons-purpose fissile material should be the next multilateral measure directed towards nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament had not yet started negotiations to that end, and Japan therefore intended to join with other interested countries in expediting the process.

11. In the interests of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it was extremely important to manage the plutonium recovered from dismantled nuclear weapons safely and to dispose of it safely and as speedily as possible, ensuring that it was not reused for military purposes. In that connection, Japan looked forward to progress in the consultations between the United States, the Russian Federation and the Agency aimed at the placing of such plutonium under Agency safeguards. It intended to take part in the international co-operative effort in question, exploiting technology which it had developed for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, and thereby to help promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Over the past three years, Japan had made public the details of its plutonium stocks. Furthermore, it hoped to implement at an early date the international framework for enhancing the transparency of plutonium management which was currently being considered by the countries concerned.

12. Turning to the issue of nuclear weapons development in the DPRK, he said that the light-water reactor project of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was well under way. The groundbreaking ceremony which had taken place on 19 August had been an important milestone in the implementation of the project, which his country hoped would help to resolve that issue. Japan, which would continue to collaborate closely with KEDO, would like to see the DPRK allaying the concerns of the international community by complying strictly with the Agreed Framework and implementing in full its safeguards agreement with the Agency. Japan would continue to support the Agency's efforts to achieve full compliance by the DPRK with the safeguards agreement.

13. Since its establishment, the Agency's safeguards system had played a crucial role in ensuring nuclear non-proliferation against a background of increasing nuclear energy utilization for peaceful purposes. Japan, which had regarded the Agency's safeguards system very highly from the outset, was faithfully implementing its safeguards agreement with the Agency. It had urged those countries which had not acceded to the NPT to do so and to conclude safeguards agreements with the Agency. It had also urged all countries which had concluded such agreements with the Agency to faithfully discharge the resulting obligations.

14. Recent events in connection with the development of nuclear weapons in Iraq and the DPRK had led to strong international pressure in favour of strengthening the Agency's safeguards system. In that connection, Japan had been delighted with the adoption in May 1997 of the Model Protocol for the implementation of Programme 93+2 Part 2 measures for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the system. It was grateful to the other countries which had participated in the negotiations and to the Secretariat. For its part, Japan, which had contributed actively to the adoption process and would endeavour to conclude an additional protocol with the Agency soon, hoped that the Programme 93+2 Part 2

measures would be implemented without delay by all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States. In the meantime, it would like the Secretariat to take further action to improve the efficiency of the safeguards system with a view to ensuring zero growth in the medium- and long-term costs of safeguards implementation.

15. There had been remarkable progress in nuclear safety during the past year. At the Nuclear Safety and Security Summit held in Moscow in April 1996, the leaders of the G-7 and the Russian Federation had confirmed the importance of nuclear power as an energy resource compatible with the goal of sustainable development. Also, they had declared their commitment to ensuring international nuclear safety, strengthening the Agency's safeguards system and preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. At the Summit, Japan had made a proposal which had led to the holding in November 1996 of the Tokyo Conference on Nuclear Safety in Asia. The Conference, which had been the first intergovernmental meeting in Asia on the issue of nuclear safety, was to be followed by a similar one planned for Seoul in October 1997. Japan was grateful to the Agency for the expertise and know-how it was making available for such international conferences.

16. His country welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the first international agreement in the nuclear safety field. Ensuring safety was an essential prerequisite for the development and use of nuclear energy. Japan hoped that implementation of the Convention would enable a high level of safety to be achieved throughout the world and that many more countries would accede to the Convention. His country also welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which it hoped would improve waste management safety worldwide.

17. Mindful of the importance of technical co-operation with developing countries, Japan had participated in various initiatives to encourage the development and utilization of nuclear energy in Asia. Also, it had made significant contributions to the TCF and within the framework of the RCA, and it would continue to contribute as much as possible.

18. Japan was currently undertaking drastic budgetary reforms in order to improve its financial situation. Given the importance of the Agency, Japan would continue to co-operate with it to the extent possible. However, it expected the Secretariat to continue striving for realistic and efficient management through - for example - the prioritization of activities. As an international organization specializing in nuclear energy, the Agency had a significant role to play in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and strengthening the non-proliferation regime, which was one of the foundations of world peace and security. For that reason, Japan was determined to maintain its active role in Agency affairs, and it very much hoped that other Member States would do likewise.

19. Mr. PEÑA (United States of America) read out the following message from the President Clinton to the General Conference:

“On behalf of the people of the United States, I extend to you my best wishes for a most successful meeting. The 1997 General Conference is clearly a special event - affording us an opportunity to pause and reflect upon the important contributions that the IAEA has made to international peace and prosperity over the past 40 years. It also affords us an opportunity to recognize and pay tribute to the outstanding work of Dr. Blix during his tenure as Director General. And, it affords us the opportunity to look ahead, to a new millennium and to the role that this unique organization will play in our collective future.

“Looking back over these four decades, there are several characteristics that mark the work of the IAEA and its Secretariat. Excellence at every level has been a hallmark. The Agency has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the most effective and well-managed members of the United Nations system. Commitment is equally obvious. Despite budget constraints, the IAEA and the Secretariat have remained dedicated to getting the job done. Creativity is another characteristic. IAEA personnel are constantly called upon to identify approaches to complex technical issues for which there are no convenient directions or road maps to follow.

“In no small measure, the excellence, commitment and creativity of the IAEA have been exemplified and fostered by outgoing Director General Hans Blix. In his 16 years of service as Director General, he has grappled with some of the most difficult issues any international organization has been called upon to address. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal thanks to Dr. Blix for a job exceedingly well done, and to wish him the very best in the years ahead.”

20. As President Clinton had noted, the General Conference was meeting at a special time in the Agency's history - at a time when the organization was celebrating its fortieth anniversary. On the present occasion, the Conference should, like Janus, the god with two faces, look simultaneously towards the past and towards the future. Although there were several reasons to be proud of what had been accomplished, it was necessary to focus on the challenges of the next 40 years. The nuclear arms race had ended, but a new race had begun - one to settle the legacy of the Cold War by leaving to future generations a safer and more prosperous world. There could have been no victor in the nuclear arms race. However, everyone would share in the victory in the race to eliminate nuclear weapons and ensure the safe utilization of nuclear science for peaceful purposes, and future generations would reap the greatest benefits.

21. In the new race, there were six milestones marking progress towards the finishing line: the establishment of stronger barriers against proliferation; deep reductions in nuclear stockpiles; extension to all nuclear-weapon States of the verification of fissile material removed from military applications; an end to the production of fissile material for weapons; the safe operation of all nuclear reactors and the adoption of effective strategies for spent fuel and radioactive waste management; and expansion of the use of nuclear science and technology to meet critical human development goals. He would comment on each of those milestones, which the United States was helping to attain in accordance with its fundamental

belief in fulfilling its non-proliferation and arms control commitments and in using the atom to promote world peace, prosperity and health.

22. As regards barriers against proliferation, the Agency had in 1997 taken a momentous step with the completion of the Programme 93+2 Model Protocol. Having commended the Secretariat, its leader and the Member States which had worked together in bringing about approval of the new instrument, he said that it was now incumbent upon all concerned to ensure that it entered into force as soon as possible. The United States, for its part, would begin by applying all the new provisions on an experimental basis at the Argonne National Laboratory. Furthermore, it was planning to begin negotiating its protocol with the Agency at the beginning of 1998.

23. The 1994 United States - DPRK Agreed Framework had effectively frozen the sensitive elements of the DPRK's nuclear programme. In that context, the United States was leading the effort directed towards the safe storage of the DPRK's plutonium-bearing spent fuel, which was under Agency safeguards. The work would probably be completed by the end of 1997, thanks in large part to a partnership which the United States had with the Agency. Such a partnership was essential for dealing with a challenge which all were now facing - the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups. The Agency had an important role to play in preventing the smuggling of nuclear materials, and its efforts should be supported. The eight countries which had participated in the June 1997 Denver Summit had announced their collective determination to prevent the smuggling and theft of nuclear materials and all forms of nuclear terrorism. The United States would like to see all countries co-operating in ensuring that nuclear materials could not be stolen, diverted or used unlawfully. In a related effort, the United States had been co-operating with Russia and other countries since 1994 in upgrading the security of tons of weapons-usable nuclear materials.

24. As regards the reduction of nuclear stockpiles, the United States and Russia had made considerable progress in fulfilling their arms control commitments. START I and II, once fully implemented, would reduce the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia by about 70% from their Cold War peaks. Moreover, at the Helsinki Summit in March, the two countries had agreed on a framework for negotiations on START III, which would lead to a further reduction in nuclear forces and, for the first time, provide for the destruction of strategic warheads, making reductions irreversible. The United States looked forward to beginning the negotiations on START III as soon as START II entered into force. It hoped that the other nuclear-weapon States would soon join it in what was a vitally important task.

25. With regard to the third milestone, in accordance with its commitment to arms control and non-proliferation the United States was making every effort to ensure that its excess fissile material was never used again in weapons. Since 1995, it had declared more than 225 tons of fissile material as excess to its defence requirements, and President Clinton had given an undertaking that the material would never be used again in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Twelve metric tons of that excess material were currently under Agency safeguards, and in 1996 the United States had undertaken to make 26 metric tons more available for inspection. Also, an additional 52 metric tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium no

longer in military use could soon be inspected by the Agency. Russia was likewise making progress in that area. The two countries were working with the Agency on the development of new techniques for verifying fissile material from nuclear weapons. However, he would like to see progress being made not only by the United States and Russia. All five nuclear-weapon States had a responsibility to submit their excess fissile material to Agency inspections.

26. He therefore hoped that all of them would remove from their military programmes a specific quantity of fissile material, never to be used again for military purposes.

27. In order to make the world a safer place for future generations, it was also necessary to ensure that fissile material from dismantled nuclear weapons was managed safely and securely. That was a shared responsibility of all in an area where the United States and Russia were working hard. In accordance with an agreement that the two countries had concluded, over the next 20 years the United States would purchase from Russia approximately 500 metric tons of highly enriched uranium from dismantled Russian nuclear weapons which would be blended down and used in power reactors; that was the equivalent of more than 20 000 nuclear weapons. The United States had previously undertaken to withdraw 174 metric tons of excess highly enriched uranium from military use, and the Agency would shortly begin to inspect much of the blended-down material - for the first time verifying that fissile material from a nuclear-weapon State's military sector, where it had signified death and destruction, had been converted into fuel for use in lighting homes and powering factories.

28. Over the next 20 years, the United States and Russia would be faced with the task of managing, safely and securely, the vast quantities of plutonium freed by reductions in nuclear weapons. The United States, which had announced its intention to use two methods in disposing of excess plutonium, believed that those two methods - namely, use in reactors and immobilization - could serve its non-proliferation and global security objectives.

29. In addition to reducing stockpiles and controlling excess fissile material, it was imperative to put a stop to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty was a crucial and long overdue task. For that reason, his delegation regretted that the Conference on Disarmament had failed to launch negotiations on such a treaty; it hoped that the Agency's fortieth anniversary would lead to a breakthrough. Despite the current stalemate, progress had been made towards attainment of the treaty's objectives. The previous week, the United States and Russia had concluded, within the framework of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, an agreement which would end the production of weapons-grade plutonium. They had also concluded an agreement on co-operation in converting the three Russian reactors which were still producing weapons-grade plutonium.

30. The United States believed that nuclear science had great potential. When planning for the future, however, it was necessary to learn from the past. In that context, nuclear safety and environmental management should be a focus of concern. The Agency should continue to play a key role in the international efforts to ensure high levels of nuclear safety at commercial nuclear power plants throughout the world. The Convention on Nuclear Safety had marked an important step in that regard, and the United States, which was supporting the efforts to

achieve the widest possible adherence to it, intended to become a Contracting Party in the near future. The United States was already collaborating in the international community's efforts to address one of the world's most pressing nuclear safety concerns - the need to improve the safety of nuclear power plants in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. He and Russia's Minister for Nuclear Energy, Mr. Victor Mikhailov, would that day be signing an agreement on co-operation in dealing with international safety issues.

31. The Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage would enable better use to be made of the technical resources available in countries where reactors were in operation. The Convention was part of a broad effort to improve nuclear safety throughout the world, and the United States hoped that other countries would join in becoming signatories.

32. The historic initiative taken by the G-7 and Ukraine with a view to ensuring the safety and stability of the ageing Chernobyl sarcophagus was a further demonstration of a joint commitment to nuclear safety. At the Denver Summit, the G-7 had pledged US \$300 million in support of what was to be a \$750 million effort. A pledging conference at which consideration would be given to ways of raising the outstanding amount was to be held in November in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly's current session. The United States hoped that other Agency Member States would also support the initiative.

33. It was essential to remain capable of ensuring the safety of nuclear reactors. Growing populations and rising standards of living in the world meant an ever-increasing demand for energy. Nuclear power could play a significant role in helping to meet that demand - and in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. However, concerted action was necessary in order to meet the environmental challenges associated with nuclear power generation. In particular, the nuclear community must remain committed to the effective management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. The international standards enshrined in the recently adopted Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management attested to its determination to promote a culture of nuclear safety, and he therefore hoped that many other delegates would join him in signing the Convention during the current week.

34. The United States, which was committed to using the atom to promote world peace, prosperity and health, was the single largest donor to the Agency's technical co-operation programme. It supported the Partners in Development approach because it believed that nuclear science and its numerous applications had great potential. However, one should never forget that the peaceful utilization of the atom carried with it a tremendous responsibility - the responsibility to ensure that the atom was not used to cause harm. The international community had shown that it was capable of shouldering that responsibility by concluding, after almost 40 years, the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would help to end proliferation and to prevent further advances in the development of nuclear stockpiles around the world.

35. The 146 countries which had joined the United States in signing the CTBT were to be commended. The previous week, President Clinton had announced that he would be sending the CTBT to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. All the countries represented at the General Conference's current session would, he hoped, ratify the CTBT soon so that it might enter into force with a minimum of delay. Despite the significant progress made since the first session of the General Conference, there was still much to be done. In urging the Agency to continue its mission, he pledged the continuation of his country's mission - the fulfilment of non-proliferation and arms control commitments and utilization of the atom to promote world peace, prosperity and health.

36. Mr. AGHAZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said he wished first of all to thank Dr. Blix for all he had done during his 16 years at the helm of the Agency and to congratulate the new Director General, whose experience would undoubtedly prove useful to the Agency in the pursuit of its goals, particularly for the benefit of the developing and the Islamic world. The Islamic Republic of Iran would do its best to support him.

37. The international community was facing momentous issues. Contrary to expectations, the end of the Cold War had not terminated the arms race, and regional conflicts persisted. Although the threat of nuclear Power confrontation had been eliminated, complete nuclear disarmament had not been achieved. The Superpowers had not turned all their fissile material into nuclear fuel, and some States had even made the implementation of disarmament treaties conditional on other issues. Nuclear tests were continuing despite the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the NPT was not being fully implemented, although some 180 countries had signed it. With the world's population and the developing countries' needs growing, the end of the Cold War should have led to an era of nuclear energy utilization by all for peaceful purposes and without obstacles or discrimination. Yet the utilization of nuclear energy, which was more indispensable now than ever before, was fraught with political obstacles.

38. Under such circumstances, the Islamic Republic of Iran believed that a clear dividing line should be drawn between the use of nuclear technology and the production of nuclear material for nuclear weapons manufacturing, on one hand, and for peaceful purposes, on the other. With regard to nuclear disarmament, the NPT should be enforced scrupulously and equitably for all. The Agency should monitor and report regularly on its implementation by the nuclear-weapon States, which had committed themselves to dismantling their nuclear weapons within a given time period. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be made universal and its defects eliminated, and the other nuclear disarmament treaties should be implemented as well. The Agency's safeguards system should be improved and strengthened, and related treaties concluded under the Agency's auspices should be observed by all Member States. That would eliminate the threat of undetected programmes not under Agency safeguards and make possible the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, which was less polluting to the environment. Finally, with regard to nuclear technology, the Agency was the best organization for organizing its transfer to developing countries; the Agency's technical co-operation programme should therefore be expanded.

39. In all those areas, the Agency's mission was clear: it should adapt and respond effectively to changes in the world at large. Among its main tasks were efficient management of the world's peaceful utilization of nuclear technology and support for the cause of nuclear disarmament. Careful regulation in that connection was indispensable in order to avoid discrimination against certain States while the actions of certain others were ignored.

40. The Agency's role must therefore be strengthened in the following fields: the dissemination of nuclear technology, the formulation of guidelines and the provision of consultative services; the enhancing of safeguards so that no State abiding by its safeguards obligation was deprived of the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, non-proliferation was ensured and a true nuclear safety culture was created; the transfer of nuclear technology to the developing world; the adoption and implementation of binding conventions such as the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage; the application of safeguards to nuclear materials and the prevention of illicit trafficking; the management of nuclear waste; information-gathering, so that the Agency no longer had to rely on the technical facilities of certain of its Member States and a stop could be put to disinformation campaigns against some Member States.

41. The objectives of the Iranian nuclear programme were peaceful. In the past, the Agency had conducted many inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities, and its conclusions had always been to that effect. Following a recent visit, in July 1997, the Director General had once again announced that the Iranian nuclear programme was a peaceful, civilian programme. The Islamic Republic of Iran was a party to the NPT, and its nuclear programme excluded military uses of nuclear technology. The objective was for 20% of the country's electricity to be generated in 20 years' time by nuclear power plants. The Bushehr plant would produce 1000 megawatts, and the Russian Federation, which was assisting with its construction, had undertaken to apply Agency standards at all construction stages. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which was using nuclear techniques in agriculture, industry and medicine, was participating in the Agency's technical co-operation programme and seeking to ensure a high standard of radiation safety in the various nuclear applications. Finally, it was co-operating closely with the Agency in the safety area and with other developing countries in the acquisition of peaceful nuclear know-how for the benefit of mankind.

42. The Islamic Republic of Iran had ratified or was in the process of ratifying the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance Convention, and the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage.

43. All States had an indisputable right to use the latest technology in the interests of their populations. Energy was central to the world economy, and every State needed to diversify its energy sources. The use of nuclear power plants should be considered in that light. Unfortunately, some nuclear States had engaged in disinformation campaigns against other countries, making accusations about their nuclear programmes. The Agency should take an unambiguous stand on that issue. It should gather information itself, rather than relying on certain States' technical facilities. It was not logical that the Islamic Republic of Iran, which

respected all its commitments vis-à-vis the Agency, should be the subject of accusations. The Agency should be fair and should clearly announce its conclusions about the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, one of its Member States.

44. Among the factors strengthening the NPT regime was the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones like those in Africa and South-East Asia. In 1974, his country had been the first to call for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, one of the strategically most important parts of the world. Israel had not been co-operative in that regard, rejecting Agency safeguards and refusing to become a party to the NPT. It had thus turned its back on the international community and world public opinion. How could a country which rejected responsibility for its nuclear programme impose itself on the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Group when members of the Group were seeking to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone? As to the United States, it had been supporting Israel and approving its acts of aggression, thereby destroying peace and security in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran was very much in favour of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East provided that Israel complied with all of the Agency's requirements.

45. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy were an excellent basis for international co-operation and integration. Harnessing the atom's power under Agency safeguards was one of the avenues to global peace and security. As a Member State, the Islamic Republic of Iran had consistently co-operated in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Agency's policy-making organs and would continue to do so. In that connection, it believed that the Agency would succeed in attaining its goals only if those resolutions were implemented by all Member States equitably and without the intrusion of political considerations. Double standards would only harm the Agency. The reason why some international organizations with responsibilities in the field of peace and security had not been very successful was that they were overly politicized. The Agency's main goal was too important to be the subject of politics. He hoped that at its current session the General Conference, committed solely to the interests of the global family, would open up new horizons for the fair and peaceful utilization of nuclear energy by all Member States of the Agency.

46. Mr. SCHÜSSEL (Austria), referring to the fortieth anniversary of the Agency's foundation, said that the Agency could look back on 40 years of remarkable achievements in the service of the international community. The Agency had contributed greatly to the maintenance of international security through non-proliferation, and its activities in the field of nuclear safety deserved the highest praise. Also, it was considered to be an international organization operating to the highest standards of efficiency. Accordingly, Austria congratulated the Agency and all its present and former staff members. Being host country to the Agency was a source of pride for Austria, which was sure that the Agency would play an increasingly important role in the years to come. However, its model organization status should never be taken for granted. The Agency - with its constantly evolving activities, particularly in the safeguards area - should never abandon the process of adaptation and self-examination. It was in that spirit that Austria would on 20 October be hosting a symposium - in Vienna - on the future role of the Agency.

47. Austria was profoundly grateful to Dr. Blix for the way in which he had managed the affairs of the Agency, whose present position was due in large measure to his efforts. He hoped that Dr. Blix would maintain his close ties not only with the Agency but also with Austria. At the same time, he was happy that Dr. ElBaradei, an international lawyer of great repute and proven administrative ability, would soon be taking up the duties of Director General. His many years of experience within the Agency were a guarantee of continuing efficiency combined with innovation.

48. The position of the Member States of the European Union would be presented by the delegate of Luxembourg. Austria shared that position without reservation, so he would confine himself to some remarks on matters of particular interest to his own country. First of all, nuclear arms control and disarmament were items of utmost priority on the international agenda. Events like the Helsinki Summit, which had opened up the perspective of a rapid entry into force of START II and a beginning of negotiations on START III, or the recent breakthrough in distinguishing between strategic and tactical anti-ballistic missile defence systems in the context of the ABM Treaty were regarded by Austria as important steps towards an objective which was for all: the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

49. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), designed to play a crucial role in countering both vertical and horizontal proliferation, had already been signed by over 140 States. After the conclusion of its relevant constitutional procedures, Austria would soon be joining the seven countries which had already ratified that key instrument. He was pleased that Vienna had been chosen as the hub of the CTBT system. The fact that the Agency had its Headquarters in Vienna had played a decisive role in that choice, and there was no doubt that the Agency and the future Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) would benefit greatly from being situated close to each other - through having common support services and through synergies resulting from co-operation. The Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO now had the task of setting up the international monitoring system foreseen by the CTBT. As the system would in many ways be quite unlike any verification system set up hitherto, the task was an extraordinarily challenging one. However, the Provisional Technical Secretariat, with the support of experts from a large number of signatory States, had already made remarkable progress. Austria was convinced that early completion of that task would make for comprehensive implementation of the CTBT and its timely entry into force.

50. Important for the attainment of non-proliferation objectives were the Model Protocol extending the Agency's safeguards system - adopted at the end of Programme 93+2 - and the hoped for negotiations on a convention banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material. Austria considered Programme 93+2 to have been an unprecedented victory in the cause of non-proliferation. The present safeguards system had made an important contribution to non-proliferation, but the international community had had to acknowledge at the beginning of the 1990s that it was possible for an extensive nuclear weapons programme to remain undetected for years despite the application of traditional safeguards. Programme 93+2, by widening the scope of safeguards to encompass all aspects of national nuclear programmes and not just those directly involving fissile material, had provided the right answer to the

problem. The Secretariat was to be commended for having elaborated what had been an excellent programme and also for its unceasing activities within the framework of the present safeguards system; it had made an indispensable contribution to international security and stability. Austria was participating very actively, with its European Union partners, in working out modalities for the speedy conclusion of additional protocols by the Agency, the Member States of the European Union and EURATOM.

51. The Agency's safeguards system, as efficient as it was or would be, nevertheless needed to be complemented by export control regimes like those applied by the Zangger Committee or the Nuclear Suppliers Group. With a view to promoting greater transparency, a seminar on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation was due to be held soon in Vienna; it would undoubtedly be most instructive.

52. It was impossible to discuss nuclear non-proliferation without mentioning the dangers inherent in illicit trafficking in nuclear materials by non-State entities. The Agency was to be highly commended for addressing that phenomenon, which was of increasing concern to all States. In the context of Agency activities relating to it, the Austrian Government had recently asked the Austrian Research Centre Seibersdorf to carry out a pilot study on border monitoring systems; upon completion of the study, the results would be presented to the Agency as a contribution in kind.

53. The dangers associated with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were rightfully receiving ever greater attention all over the world. Austria very much appreciated the broad range of activities undertaken by the Agency in relation to nuclear safety, such as the extrabudgetary programme on the safety of WWER nuclear power plants, to which it had contributed both in kind and financially. The elaboration of a system of legally binding international instruments concerning nuclear safety at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle was one of the chief objectives of Austrian foreign policy. Austria had renounced the nuclear power option, but it was exposed to the risks posed by the numerous nuclear installations located both in close proximity to and at some distance from its borders. The Convention on Nuclear Safety, which had entered into force in October 1996, could be considered the cornerstone of the system of international norms which Austria wished to see established. Austria attached particular importance to the peer reviews provided for in the Convention and in the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Reviews of Contracting Parties' implementation reports were essential for ensuring that the objectives of the Convention on Nuclear Safety were achieved. Austria had recently joined the approximately 40 States which had ratified the Convention, and it hoped that many more States would ratify the Convention in the very near future.

54. The adoption in Vienna, under the Agency's auspices, of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management had been a further step forward in the development of international nuclear law. The Convention on Nuclear Safety covered only the safety of nuclear reactor operations, whereas the Joint Convention subjected most other aspects of civil nuclear activities to an international regime

which, thanks to the constant scrutiny of national safety measures, would help to improve international standards. Austria was particularly pleased that the Joint Convention also took into account the interests of States located very close to sites covered by that instrument; nevertheless, it expected that the development of convergent national safety standards would lead to the adoption of legally binding international standards for nuclear safety in general. The work of the Agency in that sphere provided an excellent starting point. Moreover, the scope of future negotiations should include military installations and those parts of the nuclear fuel cycle which were not yet covered by binding international rules.

55. Turning to the recent adoption of the Protocol to amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, he said that in his country's view the main result of the amendment of the Vienna Convention was that the amount for which operators were liable in the event of a nuclear accident had increased to 300 million SDRs. That constituted progress, but even such a higher amount was only symbolic when viewed against, for instance, the damage caused by the Chernobyl accident on Austrian territory alone. At the same time, Austria attached great importance to the fact that environmental damage was now covered. The Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage was a further significant step in the development of international nuclear law in that it provided for the establishment, after a nuclear accident, of a fund to be financed by contributions from all the Contracting Parties. Austria welcomed the fact that the Convention stipulated that States should contribute to that fund in accordance with their nuclear capacities and that at least 50% of the fund would be available for the reparation of damage suffered outside the territory of the State in which the nuclear accident had occurred. Ultimately, the success of those two new instruments would depend largely on whether and when the main producers of nuclear power became Contracting Parties; the norms reflected in the two instruments would gain broad international acceptance only if those countries did become Contracting Parties. Before all nuclear damage was covered there would have to be further progress in international law.

56. The Agency's technical co-operation programme encompassed very diverse elements reflecting differences in geography, climate, state of development and regional conditions. Austria attached great importance to those aspects of the programme which related to food and agriculture, health care, environmental protection, water resources, irrigation and - at the forefront of its concerns given the nuclear power plants near its borders - safety.

57. In conclusion, he said that the Agency could look to the future with confidence. The aforementioned international symposium, to be held under the auspices of the Austrian Government should offer an opportunity to review the past achievements of the Agency and also the challenges likely to face it in the future.

58. Mr. SANTER (Luxembourg) - speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - said that the General Conference was meeting in a particularly solemn atmosphere as it was celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Agency and also witnessing the hand-over of power from Dr. Blix to Dr. ElBaradei. The

achievements of the Agency had been extraordinary, in both quantity and quality, and the time had now come to build on them while exploring new fields of endeavour.

59. Dr. Blix had been the main author of those achievements, of which the Agency could be proud. With his energy, his human qualities, his great enthusiasm and his authority, he would be leaving a permanent imprint on the Agency. He deserved the congratulations and gratitude of all for the great services rendered by him. The succession would be difficult, but Dr. ElBaradei, who had proved his worth within the Agency, could count on the support of the European Union and associated countries in his efforts to maintain the great prestige and dynamism of the Agency and its effectiveness in the service of its Member States. Thanking Austria for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded by it to Member States, he said that the European Union was sure that Austria would continue with its greatly appreciated support for the Agency.

60. For the European Union, the NPT remained the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. The European Union welcomed the fact that since the General Conference's previous session Angola, Djibouti and Oman had acceded to the NPT and Brazil had expressed its intention to do so. The European Union, which was still calling for universal accession to the NPT, would like those States which had not yet done so to accede to the NPT and conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. The European Union had welcomed the important decisions taken in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference regarding the indefinite extension of the NPT, the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament" and "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty". It had also welcomed the generally very constructive atmosphere at the first session of the committee which had the task of preparing for the next NPT review conference, to be held in the year 2000, and was pleased with the results of that session. In the light of those results, the European Union intended to pursue the consideration of both procedural and substantive matters at the second session of the preparatory committee, and it hoped that all States would join in.

61. The adoption and signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by 146 States had been another major contribution to the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation and to the process of nuclear disarmament. The international community should now intensify its efforts to attain the four following high-priority objectives: universality of the NPT, the accession of as many States as possible to the CTBT, the immediate opening and rapid conclusion of negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, and the implementation of Article VI of the NPT (relating to nuclear disarmament).

62. Referring to the very important results achieved by the Agency since the fortieth session of the General Conference, he said that the adoption by the Board of Governors on 15 May 1997 of a Model Protocol designed to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, mainly with a view to the detection of undeclared nuclear activities, had been a remarkable success. Although developing the Model Protocol had been a very delicate and difficult task, the committee requested by the Board of Governors to draft

the text had succeeded, under the enlightened and efficient Chairmanship of Ambassador Walker, in completing the job rapidly. The European Union was grateful to all those Agency Member States which had contributed to the work on the Model Protocol, which opened a new era in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. Within the European Union, there was strong determination to conclude additional protocols with the Agency as soon as possible. To that end, the European Union had begun preparatory work which was already well advanced and would soon be completed. It would like to see all Agency Member States displaying the same willingness so that additional protocols might soon become as universal a reality as possible.

63. Another major event had been the Convention on Nuclear Safety's entry into force on 24 October 1996, three months after ratification or acceptance by 22 States, 17 of them possessing at least one power reactor. A preparatory meeting in April 1997 had established the rules of procedure to be followed by the Contracting Parties at regular meetings to review national reports on the measures that each Contracting Party was taking in order to comply with each of the safety obligations set out in the Convention - meetings which were another strong point of the Convention. The European Union was sure that the Convention on Nuclear Safety, with the regular meetings to review national safety reports, would contribute significantly to the general strengthening of nuclear power plant safety around the world. It would like all States to accede to the Convention soon and without reservations, particularly the States with nuclear power plants.

64. The adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, drafted under the capable and effective leadership of Professor Baer, had been still another major event, both from the point of view of the protection of mankind and the environment and from the point of view of public opinion. The European Union welcomed the fact that the Convention covered the safety of spent fuel management in addition to the safety of radioactive waste management. Its main significance lay in the fact that it obliged all Contracting Parties to manage their spent fuel and radioactive waste in accordance with safety criteria which guaranteed, at the various stages of management, that individuals, society and the environment would be adequately protected against radiological risks, both now and during the lives of future generations. The European Union particularly welcomed the fact that two of its members owning spent fuel reprocessing facilities had declared at the Diplomatic Conference which had adopted the Convention that they would report voluntarily on reprocessing as a spent fuel management activity under the terms of the Convention. The European Union considered that the obligations set out in the Convention were appropriate to a high level of responsibility and nuclear safety culture. It hoped that all States would have acceded to the Convention before long.

65. The European Union had noted with satisfaction the adoption of the Protocol to amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and, of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Those two new legal instruments - the result of long, intensive and difficult negotiations - inevitably represented a compromise.

66. The European Union had consistently played a very active role in the Agency's technical co-operation activities, giving priority to multilateral and bilateral assistance designed to enable developing countries to benefit from all applications of nuclear technology and thus contributing to the general development of those countries. It approved in particular of the Model Projects which were part of the technical co-operation programme and met high standards of quality and effectiveness. Also, it welcomed the high rates of implementation of Agency technical co-operation projects. Member States and the Secretariat should do all they could to maintain - or even increase - the momentum achieved.

67. The European Union was very much in favour of international co-operation in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. Not surprisingly, therefore, it had suggested the holding of a Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) seminar on transparency in order to explain to interested States the policy pursued by the NSG, whose only aim was to promote the peaceful development of nuclear technology. The seminar was taking place on 7 and 8 October 1997.

68. Although the achievements of the Agency since the previous session of the General Conference had been remarkable, the picture was not a completely rosy one. There remained problems with the implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the DPRK, and the European Union continued to be deeply concerned about the fact that the DPRK had not yet provided the Agency with all the information required for verifying that the DPRK had not diverted nuclear materials for illicit purposes and that its initial declaration was correct and complete. The DPRK's refusal to co-operate was contrary to the legal obligations accepted by the DPRK in the safeguards agreement which it had concluded with the Agency. As the European Union had stated on previous occasions, the DPRK must react positively to the profound concerns expressed by Agency Member States, finally honour its safeguards commitments and co-operate fully with the Director General.

69. Because of a the lack of co-operation on the part of Iraq, the Agency's Action Team had not been able to complete its investigatory activities in that country. The fact that the Agency could not fully implement Security Council resolutions 687, 707, 715 and 1051 was a matter of grave concern to the European Union. The European Union had taken note of the letter which Iraq's Minister of Foreign Affairs had sent to the Director General on 1 May 1997 and in which he had given assurances regarding the compliance of Iraq with its obligations under the NPT and the safeguards agreement concluded by it with the Agency. The European Union would like to see the assurances given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs translated into action - in their totality and without delay. It was essential that the Action Team receive from Iraq all the information it required in order to carry out in full the investigations called for in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

70. For several years, Member States had been considering the question of a possible revision of Article VI of the Agency's Statute. Essentially, three issues were involved: the number of members of the Board of Governors, the criteria for the designation of Board members and the composition of the regional groups. The European Union could accept only a balanced and lasting solution which would resolve all three issues. Such a solution would have to provide for an increase in the number of Board members while taking into account the

need to maintain the Board's effectiveness and efficiency, for a redefinition of the designation criteria and for guarantees that each Member State could belong to the regional group corresponding to the geographical region where it was located. In accordance with the principles of fairness and justice, no Member State should be deprived of the possibility of serving on the Board as an elected member of a regional group. The European Union could therefore accept the proposal put forward by the Chairman of the Board of Governors - a compromise proposal which would resolve the various issues relating to Article VI of the Statute.

71. In conclusion, he said that the European Union and associated countries would give the Agency their full, active support and help to guide it towards new horizons under the leadership of its new Director General.

72. Ms. BENKHADRA (Morocco), having welcomed the approval of Malta and Burkina Faso for membership of the Agency, said that the fortieth anniversary of the Statute's entry into force provided an opportunity to assess the progress made in strengthening international peace and the results obtained in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

73. Morocco was committed to the principles of international law and to the strengthening of regional peace, as shown by its accession to the NPT and the Pelindaba Treaty and by its having concluded a full-scope safeguards agreement with the Agency. Moreover, Morocco was ready to enter into negotiations with the Agency regarding the conclusion of a protocol additional to that full-scope safeguards agreement. At the same time, Morocco would like to see the Agency doing all it could to achieve universality of the NPT and working for general disarmament through the provision of appropriate assurances to States that did not possess nuclear weapons, particularly in the Middle East; that would reinforce the security also of African countries. The credibility of the safeguards system depended not so much on its capacity for exposing non-declared nuclear activities as on its comprehensive and equitable application for the purpose of maintaining and strengthening international peace and security and thereby fostering mutual trust among neighbouring States. Accordingly, States should permit no exceptions to the rule of international law in such matters.

74. The arduous tasks awaiting the Agency required the elaboration of plans and strategies for dealing with numerous problems, such as those caused by illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources. Morocco was determined to work with the Secretariat and other Member States in combating that phenomenon, whose consequences could be so damaging to world peace and security.

75. Morocco welcomed the achievements of the Agency and Member States in developing binding international agreements on nuclear safety, civil liability for nuclear damage and radioactive waste management. Morocco had just signed the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, important instruments aimed at ensuring the transfer of technology and nuclear materials for peaceful purposes with no adverse effects on the environment or health. During the Diplomatic Conference which had adopted the Joint

Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Morocco had spoken in particular about those provisions of the Joint Convention which related to the need to notify transit countries of any transport of radioactive waste concerning them. Morocco would like to see the Joint Convention supplemented as soon as possible by a convention on the safe transboundary transport of radioactive waste and hoped that a working group would be established for that purpose in the near future.

76. As the strengthening of technical co-operation activities in the nuclear field with a view to promoting peace and development was one of the Agency's fundamental objectives, Morocco advocated not only Model Projects and other projects having an economic and social impact but also the development of medium-term country programmes for using nuclear technology to promote development.

77. As part of the efforts being made by it to strengthen its scientific and technical infrastructure in the nuclear field, Morocco had, inter alia, established a national radiation protection centre, a centre for nuclear studies and a facility for the irradiation of foodstuffs and had carried out studies and research with a view to the construction of a pilot plant for nuclear desalination. Other African countries were welcome to draw on the services of the national radiation protection centre within the context of AFRA. In addition, Morocco had embarked on the development of a legislative framework for nuclear activities, basing itself on the relevant international instruments which had been adopted. With regard to regional co-operation in Africa, Morocco welcomed the fact that the Agency was now focusing on the most pressing economic and social needs of Member States. In that connection, mention should be made of seawater desalination and sewage treatment using nuclear energy, the rehabilitation of arid and semi-arid zones, the combating of locusts and other agricultural pests, food irradiation and nuclear safety.

78. Putting nuclear energy to work for peace could help to remove two formidable obstacles to development: water shortages and energy shortages. The availability of water was especially critical for many countries, particularly in the Middle East and northern Africa, where the demand for water was rising constantly as a result of population growth and industrial and agricultural development. Hence the urgent need to formulate common strategies for coping with water shortages. That being a priority for Morocco, water had been the subject of an international symposium held under the auspices of King Hassan II in Marrakesh on 21 and 22 March 1997. At the end of the symposium, the participants had appealed to governments, international organizations, NGOs and the peoples of the entire world to work together in conformity with the Dublin Principles and Chapter 18 of Agenda 21 with a view to launching a "blue revolution". Morocco welcomed the recommendations adopted at the end of the international symposium held in the Republic of Korea with Agency assistance. Also, it was looking forward to the contribution to be made by the Agency in its area of competence at the international meeting on water which the World Bank was planning to hold in the coming months.

79. With regard to the question of amending Article VI of the Statute, she said that, as a result of changes on the international political scene and of scientific and technological progress, a revision of the composition of the governing bodies of a great many international organizations, including the Agency's Board of Governors, was necessary. Morocco considered that the proposal put forward by Sudan - and supported by the Middle East and South Asia Group and by the Group of 77 - constituted a formula that would rectify the present situation, ensuring the equitable and democratic representation of all regions within the Board of Governors and thereby reinforcing the credibility of international instruments originating with the Board. In any event, the question must be resolved by consensus, since it was for regional groups first and foremost to decide on their own composition and on the way in which their work was co-ordinated.

80. Mr. Sook-II KWUN (Republic of Korea), having commended Dr. Blix and the Agency's Secretariat on their hard work during the past year, said that his delegation was profoundly grateful to Dr. Blix for his dedicated service to the Agency over the past 16 years. Under his leadership, the Agency had grown into one of the most competent international organizations, and his contributions to the Agency would be long remembered by all. Also, he extended warm congratulations to Dr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General of the Agency.

81. In the four decades of its existence, the Agency had played a significant role in promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. It had been generally recognized throughout the world that the use of nuclear energy for power generation and the application of nuclear techniques in medicine, industry and agriculture had helped to improve the quality of life. At the same time, however, the world had witnessed some setbacks when proper care had not been taken, as in the case of the Chernobyl accident. For that reason, the establishment of a global nuclear safety mechanism, as represented by the Convention on Nuclear Safety, was of great significance. The Republic of Korea had welcomed the adoption, at recent diplomatic conferences, of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, of the Protocol to amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. He was sure that those international conventions would enhance nuclear safety culture worldwide.

82. In the field of non-proliferation there had been significant accomplishments, such as the indefinite extension of the NPT. The Agency's safeguards system had evolved and been continuously strengthened in the past decades. The need for a still stronger system - clearly brought out by events in Iraq and the DPRK - had led to the adoption of the Model Protocol additional to safeguards agreements. With those recent favourable developments, the international community could enter the twenty-first century with more confidence. It was now better prepared for the challenges that awaited in the next millennium.

83. The Government of the Republic of Korea was greatly worried about the planned transboundary movement of radioactive waste from Taiwan to the DPRK, an issue with implications not only for the Korean Peninsula but also for neighbouring countries. At the

Board's session in March 1997, his delegation had commented on that issue in detail and expressed its serious concern. The Board had duly taken note of the concerns expressed by a number of Member States in that regard. Since then, similar concerns had repeatedly been voiced in various international forums. The position of his Government remained firm: it was against the irresponsible deal in question, which simply must be called off - Taiwan and the DPRK must cancel their plans. In that regard, his delegation looked forward to the early entry into force of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management, and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, a long-awaited convention which would greatly contribute to the effective control of spent fuel and radioactive waste management. He had had the privilege of signing the Joint Convention that very morning on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea.

84. His Government, which had consistently supported the efforts of the Agency to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of its safeguards system, welcomed the adoption by the Board of Governors in May 1997 of the Model Protocol additional to safeguards agreements. It would make every effort to incorporate the provisions of the Model Protocol into its laws and regulations so that they might be implemented soon. In August 1997, the Republic of Korea had launched a national inspection system - a system separate from the one operated by the Agency - in order to enhance the transparency of its nuclear activities. His Government hoped that the national inspection system would help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system.

85. His country was doing a great deal to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, not only in power generation but also in industry, medicine and agriculture. In July 1997, the Government had finalized a nuclear development plan extending to the year 2010. The plan included goals for national research and development in the nuclear field over the next 13 years. The plan's implementation would involve an investment of approximately \$7 billion. Twelve power reactors were currently in operation in the Republic of Korea, and six more were under construction. By the year 2000, the country would have a total of 27 power reactors. The authorities were encouraging the development of small and medium power reactors which could be used for multiple purposes such as seawater desalination and district heating. Also, the Republic of Korea was working actively on the development of advanced reactors and in the field of nuclear fusion.

86. It was expected that in the twenty-first century Asia would become the world's most active region as regards the use and development of nuclear energy. Co-operation among Asian countries in the field of nuclear safety should therefore be strengthened. The Republic of Korea was ready to play its part. In October 1997, it would be hosting - in Seoul - a conference on ways of improving nuclear safety and strengthening nuclear co-operation in Asia. Soon, it would be opening an international nuclear training centre through which other countries, especially Asian ones, could benefit from its expertise and technology.

87. The Republic of Korea continued to attach great importance to the question of amending Article VI of the Agency's Statute. Fundamental changes had taken place in the international nuclear community during the past 20 years, and they should be reflected in the

Board's membership without further delay. Noting that a number of concrete proposals had been made in that connection, he said that, in the light of present circumstances, his country would like to see the question laid to rest soon through the acceptance of a less problematic proposal. Enough effort had been spent on the question in the course of more than two decades.

88. The Republic of Korea was deeply concerned about the continuing non-compliance of the DPRK with its safeguards agreement. Despite exhaustive efforts over the past three years, the Agency had not been able to preserve necessary information regarding the history of the DPRK's past nuclear activities, mainly owing to lack of co-operation by the DPRK. Regrettably, the DPRK was still behaving in an irresponsible manner. How could one justify the efforts being made to strengthen the safeguards system if the Agency could not effectively implement the system as it stood? His Government believed that the present frustrating situation should not be allowed to continue.

89. It was also regrettable that there still existed a fundamental difference of view between the Agency and the DPRK regarding the safeguards agreement between them. The argument of the DPRK that it had a special status and was therefore not bound by treaty obligations was unacceptable. In his country's view, the safeguards agreement between the Agency and the DPRK remained binding and in force. The DPRK, which insisted that the issue be resolved through the United States-DPRK Agreed Framework, should be reminded that, under the terms of the Agreed Framework, key nuclear components of the light-water reactors to be built in the DPRK would not be delivered without verification by the Agency of the DPRK's past nuclear activities. Technically, the verification process should be starting now. The Republic of Korea therefore once again called on the DPRK to co-operate fully with the Agency in preserving, as an interim measure, the information necessary for verification of the correctness and completeness of its initial report.

90. As the twenty-first century drew near, many challenges lay ahead for the Agency. The Republic of Korea firmly believed that nuclear energy would prove to be one of the most sustainable sources of energy in the future. However, the "nuclear renaissance" would require a more active involvement on the part of the Agency. A swift and positive response must be made to the ever-changing international environment. Also, it was necessary to erase the negative image of nuclear energy that had emerged in some parts of the world. The Agency must therefore rearrange its priorities and goals. A proper balance must be struck among the Agency's various functions in areas such as technical co-operation, safety and safeguards. His delegation would like to see the Agency drawing on the collective wisdom of its Member States. For its part, the Republic of Korea would remain a responsible member of the Agency and would continue to make every effort to promote the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the world.

REQUESTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS  
(GC(41)/INF/7, 9, 11, 14, 16 and 18)

91. The PRESIDENT drew attention to document GC(41)/INF/16, entitled "Statement of financial contributions to the Agency as at 26 September 1997". That document included a table indicating those Member States which had lost their voting rights by virtue of the application of Article XIX.A of the Statute. Since that document had been issued, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Niger had made payments and their voting rights had accordingly been restored. Iraq, Belarus, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay, which were among those Member States to which Article XIX.A of the Statute applied, had requested that their voting rights be restored; the corresponding communications were reproduced in documents GC(41)/INF/7, 9, 14 and 18. The General Conference also had before it document GC(41)/INF/11, containing a communication received from Kuwait. If there were no objections, he would take it that, following past practice, the General Conference wished to refer those requests to the General Committee for initial consideration and report.

92. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.5 p.m.

