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Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
DECADES	Databases and Methodologies for Comparative Assessment of Different Energy Sources for Electricity Generation
FFCD-F	full, final and complete declaration - final version
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
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
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PWR	Pressurized water reactor
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (former USSR)



GENERAL DEBATE AND STATEMENTS MARKING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE AGENCY (continued)  
(GC(41)/8)

1. Mr. GHAFOUR (Iraq) said that his country expected the Agency, as a specialized professional organization, not to bow to political influences when carrying out its obligation to implement paragraphs 12 and 13 of Section C of Security Council resolution 687. In accordance with paragraph 12, the Agency had destroyed, removed or rendered harmless the components of Iraq's nuclear programme, which included the nuclear material now in the custody of the Agency. The final dispatch of nuclear fuel to Russia had taken place in February 1994, and in a briefing to the Security Council on 7 November 1996, the Director General had stated that the Agency saw "no evidence of any remaining nuclear weapons capacity".
2. The activities related to ongoing monitoring and verification had begun in 1992 and the Nuclear Monitoring Group, which carried out all field activities for that purpose, had been established in August 1994. According to paragraph 24 of the report by the Director General on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq which was contained in document GC(41)/20, the Agency had conducted 400 monitoring inspections at some 130 locations during the previous year. No indication of prohibited equipment, materials or activities had been detected during those inspections. He noted that all the monitoring activities had been carried out with the full co-operation of the Iraqi counterpart, which had been submitting semi-annual declarations since 1992 and had continued to respond to any changes made to the format of the declarations.
3. Iraq had submitted the final version of the full, final and complete declaration (FFCD-F) on 7 September 1996. Although it had responded to the many remarks, requests and queries that had been received over the year which had elapsed since then, and despite the fact that several rounds of talks had taken place and a number of letters had been exchanged during that year, the Director General's report stated that the clarifications were still under evaluation. Furthermore, it claimed that the Iraqi counterpart had adopted a "minimalistic approach" in its replies which had resulted in the expenditure of additional time and effort to produce the necessary improvements in the FFCD-F. However, most of the queries raised by the Agency's Action Team had been political in nature and, as such, had gone far beyond what was required for the declaration and far beyond the Agency's mandate. The remaining queries had been marginal and superfluous and could not alter the main picture which the Agency had already formed of Iraq's programme.
4. Iraq had been concerned at the proposal submitted by the Action Team at the end of May 1997 to add a new chapter to the FFCD-F summarizing the achievements and capabilities of Iraq's nuclear programme. Such information was already included in all the chapters of the declaration, and the proposed additional chapter would only delay submission of the Agency's report to the Security Council and the subsequent lifting of sanctions on the Iraqi people.

5. Security Council resolution 687 had imposed obligations on the Agency as well as on Iraq, and it was incumbent upon the Agency to discharge its duties under that resolution without resorting to technically unjustified action that would delay the process. The Agency had a humanitarian responsibility towards the people of Iraq and should therefore not be a party to, or allow, intentionally or unintentionally, any attempts to subject the Iraqi people to starvation and genocide; nor should it permit obstacles to be put in the way of the provision of medical or agricultural assistance, as in the case of the IAEA/FAO joint project for the eradication of the screwworm. Furthermore, it should not allow its credibility to be called into question and should not become involved in raising minor issues that could be dealt with once paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 had been put into effect.

6. Mr. KALLIONÄKI (Finland) said that it seemed appropriate, in celebrating the Agency's 40th anniversary, to express appreciation to the three Directors General who had contributed decisively in the past to making the Agency such a well-functioning organization. Mr. Blix, had given it outstanding service during an eventful term of office, and Finland offered his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, its full support and co-operation in the Agency's further development.

7. During the week Finland would be signing the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and he urged all other Member States to do the same as soon as possible. The Convention would contribute to a high-level nuclear safety culture worldwide, although, regrettably, it did not cover the management of all spent fuel and radioactive waste. The issue was not a purely national one; it required that neighbouring countries be taken into account as well. Finland appealed especially to those countries which had been hesitant during the Diplomatic Conference to reconsider their positions and make a positive contribution towards the Convention's effective implementation.

8. Finland also appreciated the completion of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and looked forward to its wide ratification, although it would have preferred to see a higher level of compensation than was in fact provided for.

9. The adoption of the Model Additional Protocol to supplement existing safeguards agreements was another important step deserving special recognition. It was important that adequate financial and organizational resources be allocated within the Agency to implement effectively the measures provided for in the Additional Protocol.

10. Finally, he expressed Finland's appreciation of the draft Medium Term Perspective for 1998-2003, which provided a better basis for the Board of Governors and the General Conference to consider the Agency's programme and budget.

11. Mr. WALKER (Canada), after praising Mr. Blix for managing the Agency so magnificently and welcoming his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, said that the past year would be seen as an eventful and even historic one for Agency safeguards. Important steps had been taken towards the creation of a safeguards system that confronted and remedied the

shortcomings of the previous system which had been made particularly evident by events in Iraq. The new approach of developing a safeguards system that was appropriate to a world with significantly fewer nuclear weapons would contribute to enhanced global security. Canada had indicated that it was prepared to enter into early consultations to conclude a bilateral protocol additional to its safeguards agreement, and those consultations should begin in the coming days. It was in the interest of every State with a safeguards agreement to conclude such a protocol, for that would enable the international community to move in the direction of a more effective system which focused on where problems either could or did lie and which related resources to potential or actual problem areas rather than to the size of a State's nuclear activities.

12. Canada had been particularly eager to see the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which it had been the first country to sign. It also intended to sign in the very near future the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and encouraged all Member States to do likewise. The promotion of nuclear safety both at the regulatory and at the operational level was the key to the promotion of nuclear power.

13. The Agency played an important role in promoting the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear technology, but the public at large had to be better informed, as a priority, if it was to be properly equipped to compare the nuclear energy option with other forms of energy. The Agency was in a unique position to provide the necessary information. As to the Agency's activities in the nuclear power area in the past year, Canada particularly appreciated its efforts to implement a new international working group on heavy water reactors, in which it looked forward to participating. The safe use of nuclear power also required high standards of management systems and personnel qualifications, and Canada attributed great importance to such standards, as events at Ontario Hydro had demonstrated. Confronted in recent years with a number of management and personnel issues, Ontario Hydro, while never allowing short-term safety to be compromised, had concluded that decisive measures had to be taken if it was to regain its past standard of excellence, and had consequently laid up a number of its reactors temporarily in order to concentrate on areas that needed improvement.

14. In 1996, nuclear power stations had produced about 16% of Canada's electricity, most of it being generated in Ontario. CANDU 6 reactor units were being constructed in the Republic of Korea, and after being fully operational for over a year the first unit at Cernavoda was generating about 10% of Romania's electricity. A contract had been signed with the China National Nuclear Corporation for two CANDU 6 units. In 1996 CANDU 6 units had shown gross annual capacity factors and gross lifetime capacity factors of over 80%. As for the nuclear regulatory regime in Canada, the Nuclear Safety and Control Act had received Royal Assent in March 1997, replacing an Act of 1946.

15. Canada was the world's leading exporter of uranium and was interested in encouraging the industry worldwide to operate on the principle of sustainable development. There was a need to demonstrate that uranium could be produced, and uranium mines and mills decommissioned, while applying the highest standards of health, safety and

environmental protection, and such demonstrations should be communicated effectively to the public. Canada commended the Agency's efforts to address public concern following the closure of uranium facilities and believed that it should also take up environmental considerations early on in the planning process for new uranium mining projects. Considering that guidance on sound environmental protection practices was best co-ordinated within the framework of the NEA/IAEA Uranium Group, Canada urged the Agency, as a means of further reducing duplication of effort within secretariats, to determine the most effective way in which such initiatives could be undertaken.

16. Turning to the Agency's technical co-operation programme, he praised the reforms which had been carried out and said that his Government would continue to contribute to the Technical Co-operation Fund, and that the Canadian nuclear industry would increase its involvement in projects and consultation exercises, organizing interregional training courses and study programmes and providing experts. Canada encouraged Member States to contribute to the TCF and to participate in technical co-operation projects, and it encouraged the Agency to continue to develop approaches which would interest and attract the many potential donors.

17. Canada's policy for all international organizations was one of zero nominal growth, and accordingly it believed that the Agency should focus its activities on what was truly essential. Canada recognized the efforts that had been made in the past year, and was generally satisfied with the 1998 budget, which was very close to zero nominal growth. It expected that the budget for the next cycle would continue along the same lines and show additional efficiency gains and savings. In the year ahead, Canadian resources would be dedicated to activities lying within both the promotional and the regulatory areas of the Agency's mandate. Canada hoped to see renewed vigour being given to the DECADES project and the issuing of documentation for public consumption; the conclusion of a protocol additional to the Canada/IAEA safeguards agreement; compliance with reporting requirements under the Convention on Nuclear Safety; and implementation of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The Agency should help to ensure that each Member State was able to participate fully in its activities, and Canada looked forward to working with its partners at the Agency towards the common objective of using nuclear energy for sustainable development on a global scale.

18. Mr. PHAM KHOI NGUYEN (Viet Nam), expressing gratitude to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, for his 16 years of dedicated service to the Agency, which had helped it to become one of the most competent international organizations, and extending congratulations to his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, said that in the past 40 years the Agency had achieved great success in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. The substantial progress made in the last 12 months alone was exemplified by the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Model Additional Protocol and the Strengthened Safeguards System, 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 Funding.

19. Viet Nam was highly appreciative of the Agency's many initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of technical assistance for developing countries and strongly supported the Model Projects concept being implemented by the Agency Secretariat, which took into account the economic development priorities and needs of recipient countries. Viet Nam had made significant progress in developing its nuclear activities and was carrying out a comprehensive study on the future introduction of nuclear energy. The second phase of Viet Nam's nuclear programme was under way, with valuable assistance from the Agency.

20. Viet Nam attached great importance to the amendment of Article VI of the Agency's Statute, believing that the Board of Governors needed to be restructured in order to reflect the changes that had taken place in the world in the past ten years. It also supported the strengthening of the safeguards system with a view to making the world more peaceful and secure.

21. Mr. BORG (Malta) paid tribute to Mr. Blix, whose personal efforts, professionalism and dedication over 16 years had ensured that his legacy was a dynamic Agency well attuned to the needs of the present international climate, and congratulated his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, on his appointment.

22. The Agency had the dual objectives of dissemination of knowledge concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and application of international safeguards on nuclear material to ensure its use solely for peaceful purposes.

23. As the world had changed, the challenges and priorities of the international community had also changed, and the priorities and tasks of international bodies had had to adapt to the new environment. The Agency was no exception. In recent years, the Agency had shifted its focus increasingly to the fight against the illicit trafficking of nuclear material; to the safe use of nuclear installations; to the physical protection of nuclear material; and to the safe disposal of nuclear waste.

24. In addition, relatively recent violations of international non-proliferation norms had compelled the Agency to increase the extent and scope of its verification activities. The Government of Malta had on various occasions expressed its support for Programme 93+2 and a strengthened safeguards system, and it welcomed the agreement reached on the Model Protocol for the implementation of measures that would enhance the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities.

25. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. The collective commitment of the international community to curbing the spread of nuclear weapons had been demonstrated by the indefinite extension of that Treaty in 1995, and progress towards universality of the Treaty continued. Those States that were not yet parties to the NPT should accede at the earliest possible date and conclude safeguards agreements with the Agency.

26. The number of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones was also increasing and reinforcing wider non-proliferation efforts on a regional basis. In 1996, two new treaties had been signed with a view to establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and in South East Asia, both of which relied on the Agency for verification. Malta did not permit the entry into its harbours of vessels carrying nuclear weapons, and it believed that creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Mediterranean as well, on the basis of arrangements unanimously agreed to by all the States of the region, would inevitably contribute to peace and stability in that area. That fact had been acknowledged by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which had encouraged the creation of such zones. In the same spirit, Malta supported efforts for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

27. The Agency's activities in the area of nuclear safety had expanded as nuclear energy programmes had grown and public attention had focused more on safety issues. The Agency had important functions to carry out under two international conventions related to emergency response and preparedness, namely the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. His Government intended to examine those Conventions with a view to becoming a State Party.

28. A notable achievement in the past 12 months had been the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which contained provisions concerning the regulation, operation, and management of civil nuclear power plants. The Maltese Government believed that the Convention would enhance a global nuclear safety culture and encouraged all States to adhere to it.

29. The fear of use, or of the threat of use, of nuclear weapons not only by States but also by groups engaged in international terrorism was increasing. Such groups operated in clear defiance of internationally accepted norms of behaviour. Universal adherence to a permanent treaty on physical protection would demonstrate the resolve of the international community to address emerging threats from groups operating across borders.

30. The programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material, agreed upon by the participants at the eight-nation Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit in the previous year, was very important.

31. Nuclear export control measures were an important feature of the efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He urged all nuclear exporting countries to accept the Nuclear Export Guidelines as set out in document INFCIRC/254 and to supplement that by establishing effective national mechanisms for export control.

32. Now that the CTBTO had started its work in earnest, Malta considered that co-operation between it and the Agency was of the highest importance. The choice of Vienna as the headquarters for the CTBTO should minimize duplication between the two organizations in terms of administrative and logistic support.

33. The third central component of the Agency's activities was technical co-operation. Given adequate funding, the Agency's technical assistance activities would contribute significantly to sustainable economic development through the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology to developing countries.

34. Turning to his country's role on the nuclear scene, he said that Malta had always had a clear and consistent policy on nuclear weapons and had always supported and would continue to support and encourage any measure for nuclear disarmament. Malta was a State Party to the NPT, having deposited its instrument of ratification in 1970, only two years after it had been opened for signature, and in November 1990 the Government of Malta had signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency.

35. Although Malta was a small country and did not own or produce nuclear weapons, it had a moral and political duty to support organizations such as the Agency. It was painfully aware that the Mediterranean region was plagued by multiple sources of instability and presented particular dangers with regard to the proliferation of armaments. In terms of both quantity and destructive potential, the flow of arms into the region was daunting. Accordingly, Malta encouraged other States in the region to adhere to non-proliferation regimes such as the NPT, which would build confidence, enhance stability and strengthen co-operation among all States of the Mediterranean littoral and even beyond.

36. In conclusion, his Government was ready to support the Agency and work closely with it in exploring all avenues through which its objectives could be advanced, bearing in mind that it had been established to "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world".

37. Mr. HEATHCOTE (United Kingdom) said that 1997 was much more than just the year in which the Agency was celebrating its 40th anniversary; it had proved to be a landmark year. One of the Agency's most important achievements for some time had been the agreement reached in May 1997 on the new Model Additional Protocol, which would lead to a substantial strengthening of the safeguards system. The United Kingdom was working actively both at home and with its European partners towards the earliest possible implementation of the commitments it had made in May, and urged other States to do likewise.

38. It had also been a landmark year in nuclear safety: the United Kingdom was proud to have been among the original Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which had entered into force in October 1996, and it had been pleased with the progress made during the first preparatory meeting in April 1997. The United Kingdom wished to commend those who had worked on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; its only regret had been that no agreement had been possible to include reprocessing on a mandatory basis. His country would include its reprocessing facilities under the Joint Convention and called on all other countries which carried out reprocessing of nuclear fuel to do likewise. It further urged all countries which had not done so to join it in signing the Joint Convention without delay. The United Kingdom also welcomed 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.

39. The excellent results that had been achieved were built on sound administration, and the Agency justly enjoyed a high reputation among international organizations for the quality of its management. The United Kingdom welcomed the Secretariat's continuing efforts to make the best possible use of the resources at its disposal and the efficiency gains that had led to a return to zero real growth in the 1998 budget. His Government expected the same discipline to be exercised in the preparation of future budgets.

40. The strengthened review process of the NPT was under way and gave States parties a greater opportunity than ever to address issues of substance in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. One such issue was that of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and in that context he took pleasure in informing the Conference that the United Kingdom had recently ratified the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. Another welcome development was the agreement reached recently among a group of nine countries, including the United Kingdom, on a set of guidelines for the management of civil plutonium; it was the group's intention that those guidelines would be forwarded to the Director General for publication in December 1997. Statements of strategy for the management of plutonium and first annual figures on national holdings would be published shortly thereafter. The United Kingdom considered that the guidelines represented an important new commitment to transparency and would make a valuable contribution to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime.

41. Finally, he paid tribute to Mr. Blix, whose retirement as Director General signalled the end of an era. He had guided the Agency with great integrity and wisdom through some of the most difficult issues to face the international community, and it should be a source of pride to him that he was leaving the Agency equipped with the right tools to face the challenges of the future. The international community owed him a great debt of gratitude. In Mr. ElBaradei the Agency would have a worthy successor.

#### REQUESTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS (resumed)

42. The PRESIDENT noted that, at the previous plenary meeting, a decision on the report of the General Committee on restoration of voting rights had been deferred to the present meeting on account of ongoing consultations, and recalled that the Committee had recommended, without a vote, that the voting rights of Belarus, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay be restored and that the voting rights of Iraq not be restored.

43. Mr. ASWAD (Iraq) said that all delegates would be aware that for seven years his country had been subject to extremely restrictive sanctions which had prevented it using normal bank transfers in order to pay its contributions to international organizations. That surely constituted a case of force majeure.

44. Between 1959, when it had joined the Agency, and 1990, when the embargo had been imposed, Iraq had always paid its contributions in a regular fashion. It remained willing to do

so, and urged the Conference to consider its case on a purely legal basis and in a professional manner that eschewed all political considerations.

45. Mr. YAKOVENKO (Russian Federation) said that in the General Committee his delegation had spoken in favour of accepting Iraq's request, on the grounds that its indebtedness was a consequence of force majeure.

46. That situation had come about because of the full embargo, to which Iraq was subject, and the freeze on its assets abroad. It was therefore not in a position to pay its contributions to the Regular Budget, although it would make every effort to fulfil its obligations in future, as stated in its request contained in document GC(41)/INF/7.

47. Russia had not blocked a consensus in the General Committee, but had reserved its position with regard to Iraq's request. That remained its position for the purposes of the current meeting.

48. The PRESIDENT, observing that there were no further speakers in connection with any of the requests submitted, said he took it that the Conference accepted the Committee's recommendation that Iraq's right to vote not be restored, and that the voting rights of Belarus, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay be restored under the terms of Article XIX.A of the Statute.

49. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE AND STATEMENTS MARKING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE AGENCY (resumed)  
(GC(41)/8)

50. Mr. ADAM (Belgium) said that the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol had been a major event and welcomed the fact that the safeguards effort deployed would no longer be linked to the size of a State's nuclear programme. In support of the Agency's safeguards system, Belgium would be focusing on measures related to MOX-type fuels, a training session on the description of reprocessing plants and their verification through the entire production cycle, and a feasibility study on detection systems and procedures for preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear, radioactive or fissile materials in seaports of European Union Member States.

51. The quality and management of the Agency's technical co-operation programme had improved markedly in recent years, especially through the introduction of Model Projects. In that context, Belgium was continuing to make extrabudgetary contributions to the tsetse fly eradication programme in Zanzibar and was financing a new co-ordinated research programme for the development of new banana genotypes. In 1997, Belgium had continued to contribute to the extrabudgetary programme on the safety of RBMK and WWER reactors in Eastern Europe and to the contact group for international co-operation on radioactive waste management in the Russian Federation. At the end of 1996 Belgium had organized a regional

course on the safe transport of radioactive materials with the support of the European Commission.

52. As for the revision of Article VI of the Agency's Statute, Belgium favoured a limited enlargement of the Board of Governors that would ensure better representation of States with significant nuclear programmes. None of the proposals presented thus far was entirely satisfactory, but in a spirit of compromise Belgium was prepared to support the approach proposed by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr. Walker.

53. Turning to his country's energy policy, he said that nuclear power stations generated 57% of Belgium's electricity. Annual production of MOX fuel had increased from 35 tonnes in 1995 to 36 tonnes now; it was chiefly for export, and only to a small extent for the domestic market; the plant was undergoing substantial modernization to meet increased demand. The timetable for modernizing Belgium's power stations was on track: the equivalent of US \$150 million had been invested in 1996, chiefly for the progressive replacement of steam generators. During the work the radiation protection results had been excellent: radiation doses had been reduced to a level that was unprecedented.

54. Along with other Western countries, Belgium was participating in improving the safety of nuclear installations in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Belgian companies were undertaking more than 30 projects in Eastern Europe in 1996, and Belgian engineers were playing a prominent role in the modernization of the Novovoronezh nuclear power plant and the production of a simulator for the Beloyarsk nuclear power plant, both of which were being undertaken by European consortia.

55. As for the fuel cycle, a report was being prepared for the Belgian parliament on the re-evaluation of the choice to be made between reprocessing and the open cycles on the basis of a series of programmes including work on geological disposal and the conditioning of irradiated fuel.

56. While the Agency was celebrating its 40th anniversary, Belgium was celebrating the 40th anniversary of its first research reactor: forty-one years ago Belgium had been the first State to order a low-power nuclear plant from the United States, which had become the first PWR plant in service in Europe.

57. In conclusion, he paid tribute to the achievements of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, and expressed his country's confidence in his successor, Mr. ElBaradei.

58. Ms. BEŠKER (Croatia), having welcomed the new members Malta and Burkina Faso, said that the Agency's important contribution to nuclear safety, non-proliferation and the use of the atom for peaceful purposes had been well demonstrated over the previous four decades. Although the knowledge, expertise and capabilities it had developed would stand the Agency in good stead in meeting the challenges to come, it had to receive unequivocal support from its members if it was to serve them well in the future.

59. Croatia welcomed the progress made during the previous year; however, it was disappointed that there had been little improvement in some areas, particularly as far as universality and full compliance with safeguards standards were concerned, and it hoped that political will would prevail over long-standing divisions so that the international community could look forward to a safer and better future.

60. She was pleased to note that Croatia had been involved actively in the Agency's efforts to promote technical co-operation in recipient Member States. While her country had welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate its expertise in the application of nuclear techniques in areas including radiation protection and radioactive waste management, its performance in other areas had not been satisfactory owing to ongoing internal adjustments. Croatia recognized the merit of TCDC and attached great significance to the Model Project approach. Regular and rigorous performance evaluation together with careful pre-planning and formulation would contribute greatly to the more effective implementation of technical co-operation projects. Her country was particularly grateful to the Department of Technical Co-operation for the attention it had given to Croatia's projects, and it also thanked the Department of Research and Isotopes for its role in project implementation. With regard to the funding of technical assistance, Croatia was concerned about the decrease in the expected level of new resources for technical co-operation programmes and hoped that the major donors would reverse their decisions so that a satisfactory balance between the Agency's two most important activities could be maintained in the future.

61. Croatia welcomed the progress made in the area of nuclear, radiation and waste safety. As a joint owner of the Krško nuclear power plant, Croatia had been particularly interested in the negotiations on radioactive waste management and liability for nuclear damage and welcomed the adoption of new legal instruments which would contribute significantly to the global safety culture.

62. The adoption of the Model Protocol was a major breakthrough in strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system and Croatia would be signing an additional protocol once the requisite domestic formalities had been completed. It expected all Member States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, to contribute to attaining the goals of the new safeguards system, since the non-proliferation regime would only be successful if the new, as well as the old, measures were universally and fully applied.

63. Finally, she commended Mr. Blix on his distinguished service to the Agency and wished Mr. ElBaradei every success in leading the Agency into the twenty-first century.

64. Mr. KOSTENKO (Ukraine), after paying tribute to the central role Mr. Blix had played during the past 16 years in guiding the Agency and strengthening its contributions to the promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to the cause of international peace and security, congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment and assured him that Ukraine would continue to support him and the Agency in its activities.

65. Since the previous session of the General Conference several key events had taken place: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had been signed, the Convention on

Nuclear Safety had entered into force, and Programme 93+2 had been completed with the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol.

66. Ukraine was fully aware of the need to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and to prove it had arranged for the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from its territory during the preceding year. In addition, the safeguards agreement with the Agency was being successfully implemented, and the Government of Ukraine had decided to help enhance controls on illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and radiation sources by joining the Agency's scheme to collect reports on such activities in a database.

67. The issues of nuclear safety and radiation protection were rightly receiving ever more attention, and the Secretariat had spared no effort in organizing international co-operation to assess and improve the safety of nuclear power plants of Soviet design in Central and Eastern Europe. However, solving the problems of nuclear power plant safety would take time and would call for a great deal of legislative, economic and administrative changes. In that context, Ukraine was currently developing and reviewing laws on radiation protection, regulatory activities, and physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities, and its parliament was considering ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

68. Ukraine appreciated what the Agency was doing in order to establish a comprehensive regime of civil liability for nuclear damage and had adhered to the Vienna Convention in December 1996. Similarly, it welcomed the progress made in reaching an international consensus on the safe disposal of radioactive waste and had been one of the first States to sign the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

69. Turning to the issue of Chernobyl, he said that Ukraine had made progress in implementing the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Ottawa on 20 December 1995 between G-7, CEC and Ukraine. Despite a severe power shortage, the Government of Ukraine had decided to shut down Unit 1 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1996 and to discontinue long-term safety-related programmes there. Currently, appropriate safety levels were being maintained at the single reactor which remained in operation, and short-term safety projects had been developed for it. Thus, Ukraine was standing by its commitment to decommission the Chernobyl plant by the year 2000. However, complete decommissioning would be feasible only if Ukraine could compensate by bringing on line the new units at the Khmel'nitski and Rovno nuclear power plants. To that end, the Government was carrying out extensive reforms in the energy sector with a view to creating a cost-effective electricity market, but without the support of international financial institutions those efforts might not be wholly successful.

70. Among the important projects of the so-called Chernobyl package, the Government of Ukraine paid particular attention to the Shelter covering the remains of Unit 4, and it welcomed the United States Government's initiative to implement a major project for the enhancement of the safety of the sarcophagus enclosing the destroyed reactor.

71. With regard to the safety deficiencies detected during an inspection by WANO experts, the Ukrainian authorities had developed a plan which should allow startup of Unit 3 after its maintenance outage. However, activities to provide resources for those endeavours seemed insufficiently intense, and the Government of Ukraine feared that failure to implement the plans which had been agreed upon would bring negative responses from both within and outside Ukraine, as well as adversely affecting the peaceful use of nuclear energy in general.

72. On the subject of technical co-operation, he said that both the practical significance of the projects being conducted in Ukraine and the involvement of Ukrainian experts in regional projects were highly satisfactory.

73. Ukraine endorsed the Agency's draft budget for 1998. Although the economic difficulties which it was experiencing had prevented it from paying all its assessed contributions to the Regular Budget, it was doing its best to meet its financial obligations to the Agency while remaining committed to the principle of zero real growth. Ukraine considered that the Agency's principal activities should be financed from the Regular Budget.

74. In conclusion, he expressed approval for the Annual Report for 1996 and assured the Agency of his country's continued co-operation and support.

75. Mr. ERSKOV (Denmark), after paying tribute to Mr. Blix for his distinguished and successful tenure and congratulating Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General, welcomed the two new Agency members, Malta and Burkina Faso.

76. His country associated itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union but wished to make some additional remarks. In the four decades since its inception, the Agency had become an extremely successful organization. The adoption of the Model Additional Protocol as the outcome of Programme 93+2 and the conventions on waste management and nuclear liability had been among its notable accomplishments during the past year; however, some extremely important tasks remained to be carried out.

77. Denmark considered the NPT to be the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and strongly endorsed the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. It also considered that the Agency's safeguards system played an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. The next step in strengthening that system must be to conclude additional protocols to the comprehensive safeguards agreements of as many States as possible with a view to enhancing the Agency's capability of detecting undeclared nuclear activities.

78. Another vital instrument for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening the non-proliferation regime was export controls on nuclear material, equipment and technology. Denmark hoped that the forthcoming Nuclear Suppliers Group seminar on export controls would provide an opportunity for supplier countries to promote

greater transparency in nuclear export controls in accordance with the principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

79. Denmark attached great importance to the question of nuclear safety and, having decided for reasons of safety not to use nuclear energy for electricity generation, noted regretfully that many nuclear safety and waste disposal problems remained unsolved, and in particular that many nuclear power plants were continuing to operate at unacceptably low levels of safety. It therefore strongly supported all efforts to create a strengthened and more dynamic safety culture, including the Agency's endeavours to assist the Central and Eastern European countries and the newly independent States in making their nuclear power plants safer. Nevertheless, it feared that for certain reactors operating in those countries the only solution would be an early shutdown.

80. Denmark also supported efforts to develop legally binding agreements in the field of nuclear safety and liability and accordingly welcomed the three instruments adopted the previous month.

81. Turning to Article VI of the Statute, he said that Denmark endorsed the package of proposals put forward by the Chairman of the Board of Governors on that subject because finding a solution to the linked issues of Board expansion and composition of regional areas after two decades of debate would considerably enhance the efficiency of the work of the Agency's policy-making organs.

82. In conclusion, he expressed his country's support for the Agency's technical co-operation activities and for continued growth thereof. The target for voluntary contributions of \$71.5 million for 1998 was acceptable, and indeed Denmark had already pledged its full share of that target.

83. Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan), paying tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, and welcoming his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, said his country had made a number of proposals for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, and had offered to discuss any other ideas for an equitable and non-discriminatory non-proliferation regime in the region. Pakistan would be following with great interest the gains in effectiveness and cost-efficiency as the strengthened safeguards system became fully operational over the next five to ten years.

84. The only proven and sustainable option for meeting the inevitable steep increase in energy consumption in developing countries was the nuclear option, but it was unfortunately beset with risks and fears - most of which were based on misinformation or misapprehension. The fallacy in the supposed link between nuclear power development and proliferation derived from the fact that all five recognized nuclear-weapon States had developed their bombs before using nuclear power for generating electricity. For any State aspiring to nuclear-weapon status there were now much less costly shortcuts than civilian nuclear power, so opposition to nuclear power was either based on a misunderstanding or it was a deliberate pretext to deny the technology to less favoured countries. Despite the Chernobyl accident, the nuclear industry's safety record was unmatched by any other major enterprise. Pakistan had

been one of the first signatories of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and had now ratified it. It was to be hoped that the national reporting and peer review process envisaged in the Convention would strengthen both national commitment and international co-operation in the field.

85. Turning to the financing of technical co-operation, he noted with pleasure that the Agency's implementation rate had again exceeded 75%; however, the excellent efforts of the Secretariat had to be matched by ungrudging and timely contributions by Member States to the TCF. He appealed to all Member States to honour the collective voluntary commitment to one of the Agency's principal statutory objectives. Pakistan would be pledging its full share of the target for 1998 and hoped that there would be no reduction in the overall level of pledges and payments to the TCF.

86. His country wished to acknowledge the benefits it had derived through the Agency in nuclear safety, pest control and the development of better crop varieties. It was more than willing to share its experience and expertise with other developing countries, and had provided, through the Agency, research and training facilities at its various centres. He recalled that it had been the late Nobel laureate, Professor Abdus Salam, who, on behalf of Pakistan, had proposed to the Agency's General Conference in 1960 the idea of setting up a network of international science centres through the agencies of the United Nations. His idea - that the centres would contribute to the development of science and technology in developing countries - had crystallized in the establishment of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, which remained a living testimony to Professor Salam, who had died in late 1996.

87. In 1996-97 Pakistan's operational power plant and two research reactors had continued safe operation with the benefit of Agency-supported safety upgrades. Construction work on the country's second nuclear power plant had been completed, and equipment was being installed and commissioned satisfactorily. The country's main research and development institute was continuing its wide-ranging multidisciplinary programme in support of activities in nuclear technology, industry, medicine and agriculture.

88. Finally, he congratulated the Agency on a particularly eventful year which had seen the conclusion of three long-running exercises: Programme 93+2, the drafting of a convention on radioactive waste management safety, and the drafting of two instruments relating to civil liability for nuclear damage. It would have been an even better year if the long-standing issue of Article VI of the Statute had also been resolved, for there was now a general conviction among Member States that the efficiency, representativeness and credibility of the Board of Governors would be enhanced by the carefully considered addition of active stakeholders. Pakistan would continue its co-operation with other Member States in attempting to reach a generally agreed formula for the expansion of the Board.

89. Ms. LAJOUS VARGAS (Mexico) paid tribute to the outstanding work of Mr. Blix in his 16 years as Director General of the Agency. Under his capable leadership the Agency had been well prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

90. She welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso to membership of the Agency and congratulated the Governments of Argentina and Brazil on the conclusion of the co-operation agreement between the Agency and ABACC.

91. It was a happy coincidence that in the year in which the Agency was celebrating its forty years of existence, the Tlatelolco Treaty was commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of its opening for signature in 1967. Mexico's early accession to both the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT had been based on a consistent policy aimed at the abolition of nuclear weapons. While non-proliferation regimes helped prevent the spread of such weapons of mass destruction, the only way to achieve global peace and security was through the total absence of nuclear weapons. For more than four decades Mexico had dedicated a large part of its multilateral diplomatic effort to balanced promotion of that two-fold objective - disarmament and non-proliferation. It therefore welcomed recent progress made in both spheres and took note of the discussions under way between the United States of America and Russia.

92. The events of the past year bore witness to the unquestionable benefits of international co-operation. Key legal instruments had been concluded: 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. The first confirmed the importance of international co-operation in improving the nuclear safety regime and the others helped establish a global regime of liability and compensation for nuclear damage. Mexico also welcomed the conclusion and approval of the Model Additional Protocol for States having safeguards agreements with the Agency. Her Government shared the desire of the international community to promote nuclear non-proliferation further by strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system. The Model Additional Protocol not only strengthened the international safeguards system but also consolidated the control system of the Tlatelolco Treaty, since Contracting Parties were obliged under Article 13 of that Treaty to negotiate multilateral or bilateral agreements with the Agency for the application of safeguards to their nuclear activities.

93. Mexico attached particular importance to Article IV of the NPT and accordingly recognized the need for broader international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and for strengthening of the Agency's role in that regard. The Tlatelolco Treaty, and subsequently the NPT, had clearly set forth the indivisible dual objective of guaranteeing human safety and promoting co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Another notable aspect of the Tlatelolco Treaty was that it had been the first international legal instrument to make provisions for the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation in a large and densely populated geographical area. Other regions had followed suit and nuclear-weapon-free zones had been established under the Treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba. She hoped that yet further regions, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, would go down the same road and help reduce the risk of nuclear confrontation.

94. In reflecting on achievements of the past and the challenges of the immediate future, it was important to highlight the work done by the Agency to promote nuclear energy within the

framework of national and regional efforts aimed at sustainable economic and social development, in the course of which the Agency had also provided substantial technical and advisory assistance to the countries of Latin America. Mexico had been an enthusiastic participant in many of the 12 technical co-operation projects being carried out under ARCAL. It had hosted regional training courses and seminars and also provided specialists for missions in the region. In order to ensure that the co-operation between the Agency and the Latin American countries remained successful, however, there was a need for renewed commitment on the part of the Agency's Member States.

95. Mexico attached particular importance to the social and economic impact of nuclear technologies on the end-users, a key consideration taken up by the Agency in its Model Project concept. Such a project, entitled "National Programme of Training in Medical Physics", had been carried out in Mexico and had led to the awarding of ten diplomas in medical physics and to the establishment of a postgraduate training programme in the subject to cover future needs. That programme was now continuing without Agency assistance. Her country also planned to install two cyclotrons in 1998 for the production of radioisotopes for use in nuclear medicine, a project which would also have a significant social impact. She urged the Agency to adopt additional measures to strengthen its co-operation activities and called on all Member States to continue contributing to the TCF.

96. In conclusion, she stressed that the Tlatelolco Treaty was not only an instrument which prohibited nuclear weapons but also one that aimed to support the development and dissemination of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Its close relationship with the Agency's activities would be consolidated in future as a result of Latin America's renewed efforts with regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.

