



International Atomic Energy Agency
GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(41)/OR.8
2 June 1998
GENERAL Distr.
ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

FORTY-FIRST (1997) REGULAR SESSION

RECORD OF THE EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Thursday, 2 October 1997, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland)
later: Mr. AL-GHAIS (Kuwait)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
9	Election of Members to the Board of Governors (resumed)	1 - 4
8	General debate and statements marking the 40th anniversary of the Agency (resumed)	5 - 67
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Uzbekistan	5 - 8
	Yemen	9 - 12
	Italy	13 - 24
	Armenia	25 - 36
	Ethiopia	37 - 43
	Greece	44 - 56
	Venezuela	57 - 67

* GC(41)/28.

For reasons of economy, this document has been printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their own copies of documents to meetings.

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
9 Election of Members to the Board of Governors (resumed)	68 - 70
8 General debate and statements marking the 40th anniversary of the Agency (resumed)	71 - 95
Statements by the delegates of:	
Kenya	71 - 86
Estonia	87 - 95
9 Election of Members to the Board of Governors (resumed)	96 - 99
8 General debate and statements marking the 40th anniversary of the Agency (resumed)	100 - 168
Statements made by the delegates of:	
Algeria	100 - 107
Tunisia	108 - 115
Burkina Faso	116
Namibia	117 - 122
Uruguay	123 - 127
Bosnia and Herzegovina	128 - 132
Cyprus	133 - 140
United Republic of Tanzania	141 - 149
Jordan	150 - 155
Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean	156 - 163
Arab Atomic Energy Agency	164 - 166
League of Arab States	167 - 168

Abbreviations used in this record

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
GDP	Gross domestic product
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
LDC	Least developed country
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
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (resumed)
(GC(41)/6)

1. The PRESIDENT announced the result of the ballot to the General Conference.

2. In the election of two members from the area of Africa, the result was:

<u>Abstentions:</u>	3
<u>Valid votes:</u>	199
<u>Required majority:</u>	50
<u>Votes obtained:</u>	
Morocco	68
Ghana	49
Sudan	34
Algeria	31
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	17

3. Morocco, having obtained the required majority, was elected to the Board.

4. Since only one of the two elective places had been filled in the ballot, the General Conference would have to proceed to a second ballot in conformity with Rule 81 of its Rules of Procedure in order to fill the other elective place for the area of Africa.

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

5. Mr. SHAIKOV (Uzbekistan), after congratulating Malta and Burkina Faso on their admission to the Agency, paid tribute to Mr. Blix for his impressive contribution to the development of the organization and congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment to the post of Director General.

6. The decision of the States of Central Asia to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, and the international conference on the subject held in Tashkent on 15 and 16 September 1997, bore witness to the efforts being made by Uzbekistan and the other countries of Central Asia to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That conference, in which more than 200 representatives of 60 States and 16 international organizations had participated, had led to a number of conclusions.

7. The first was that nuclear security should be considered as an integral part of a comprehensive security system and that it was essential to strike a balance between the obligations of nuclear-weapon States and those of non-nuclear-weapon States in order to

ensure the reliable functioning of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Secondly, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone was not sufficient to guarantee security: an effective control mechanism, based on international experience, would also have to be set up. Thirdly, in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the participating States undertook to adhere to the comprehensive regime of non-proliferation and disarmament. Fourthly, the conference had underlined the specific advantages for the population, in terms of sustainable development, environment and health, of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Fifthly, the creation of such a zone in Central Asia was in line with previous efforts undertaken to safeguard regional security. Lastly, the establishment of the zone was not a mere symbolic act, and effective physical protection mechanisms would have to be put in place in accordance with international law.

8. The work of the expert groups which had met at the Tashkent conference had led to a joint statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In that statement, the Ministers had expressed the view that the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia was an essential step to strengthen regional security; had approved the principles and objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference; had welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and invited all States to sign it; had expressed their satisfaction at the large number of countries which had voluntarily assumed commitments under agreements on nuclear-weapon-free zones; had indicated their belief that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia met the interests of national, regional and global security; had called upon the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and on other States to support the establishment of such a zone in Central Asia; had urged other States to provide assistance in the rehabilitation of territories, particularly those contaminated by radioactive wastes; and, lastly, had requested agencies of the United Nations to set up a group of experts with the participation of representatives of the region to elaborate the details of the agreement to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

9. Mr. MAKKI (Yemen) welcomed the admission of Malta and Burkina Faso to membership of the Agency, congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment to the post of Director General, and paid tribute to Mr. Blix. He stressed the importance of the indefinite extension of the NPT and of the signing of the CTBT, and reiterated his country's support for the steps taken by the Agency under Programme 93+2 to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, as well as its support for measures designed to strengthen international co-operation in the fields of nuclear, radiation and waste safety, and for measures to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radiation sources.

10. With regard to the financing of technical co-operation, Yemen was in favour of any solution which would strengthen the activities carried out in that area, whether through the Technical Co-operation Fund or under the Regular Budget. The issue had become a matter of urgency because the Agency needed to strike a proper balance between its various activities. Similarly, although the achievement of zero real growth in the budget for 1998 was to be welcomed, it was to be hoped that it was the result of savings achieved through administrative

reforms and not the result of a reduction in the Agency's programmes, particularly in activities in support of technical co-operation projects.

11. Yemen had undertaken a wide-ranging programme of financial, administrative and economic reforms, and was in the process of elaborating a legal framework which would enable it to develop further its relations with the Agency in the near future. It intended to sign a comprehensive safeguards agreement and to ratify or accede to international conventions concluded under the auspices of the Agency. He hoped that the Agency would provide his country with support that was urgently needed in view of the shortage of qualified personnel, equipment, laboratories and materials. The Agency's support was also crucial in such fields as radiation protection, medicine, the environment and hydrology.

12. Yemen welcomed the results achieved by the Agency in the application of safeguards and in the implementation of Security Council resolutions, and hoped that it would make progress in the application of safeguards in the Middle East, with the objective of denuclearizing the region and eliminating all weapons of mass destruction. It was now clear to all that Israel's obstinacy was detrimental to the noble aspirations of the peoples of the region, and that its intrigues bore witness to its defiance of international resolutions and conventions and threatened the stability and security of the region and beyond. Accordingly, the international community was called upon to take the necessary steps to force Israel to conform to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and to implement the Madrid and Oslo agreements, as well as the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority and neighbouring countries. The Agency was likewise urged to take the necessary steps to induce Israel to sign the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under safeguards and to make sure that it did not develop nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. In doing so, the Agency should show the same resolve and determination as it had in the case of Iraq. If that were not done, it would be difficult to speak of trust between countries of the region and Israel, to resolve the question of Israel's admission to the Middle East and South Asia Group, or to apply safeguards in the Middle East.

13. Mr. MANNO (Italy), having endorsed the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, congratulated the Agency on its fortieth anniversary and expressed gratitude for the excellent work it had done and the results it had achieved with regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. He also congratulated Malta and Burkina Faso on having joined the Agency and addressed his warmest appreciation to the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, who had for 16 years guided the Agency with exemplary skill.

14. Italy had been a member of the Agency ever since its establishment and had manifested its commitment to the organization by assuming responsibilities in high positions: as had, for example, the late lamented Maurizio Zifferero, formerly Deputy Director General of the Department of Research and Isotopes, who had headed the Action Team for the implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq. Italy attached great importance to the Agency's activities and their future development and hoped to play a leading role in steering the Agency's programmes during its coming term on the Board of Governors.

15. Looking at the horizons opening up for the Agency on the eve of the next millennium, Italy believed that a number of issues merited special attention:

- Strengthening safeguards while remaining at zero real growth through better use of new inspection technologies and through the vesting by Member States of new powers in the Agency;
- Pursuit of maximum synergy with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization;
- Careful management of the Agency's structures and rationalization of its operations in order to make them as efficient as possible;
- Safe management of irradiated nuclear fuel, especially in the light of the feasible strategic options;
- Safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, in particular by promoting the publication of general technical guides, fostering international co-operation and encouraging the development of technologies for final disposal of long-term radioactive waste;
- Development of safety standards for the decommissioning of nuclear facilities;
- Maximum use of spin-offs from nuclear technology in the areas of environmental conservation, agriculture and human health. In that regard, the Agency's efforts in the field of technical co-operation should help to steer the needs of emerging and developing countries. That steering function was of fundamental importance. If that approach was incorporated in appropriate budget decisions, Italy would be ready to support it with adequate contributions to the Technical Co-operation Fund representing a high percentage of its share of the target.

16. Italy agreed that it was necessary for increasing efforts to be made to spread a common nuclear safety culture worldwide based on principles and rules accepted by all countries that used nuclear energy in research and power generation.

17. The safety of dangerous or obsolete nuclear power plants operating in Central and Eastern Europe and the newly independent States was a problem to which Italy devoted a great deal of attention, and it was working to improve the safety culture in that region. On the multilateral level, it contributed to the specific efforts of institutions such as the European Commission and the Nuclear Safety Account managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. It also intended to operate on the bilateral level through technical assistance projects.

18. Another matter that Italy regarded with deep interest was the Chernobyl Shelter Implementation Plan, which had a prominent place in the Memorandum of Understanding between the G-7 and Ukraine on the closure of the Chernobyl complex by the year 2000. Italy supported the decision taken by the G-7 at the Denver Summit in 1997 to contribute US \$300 million to the budget for the Chernobyl Shelter Implementation Plan, which was expected to amount to around \$760 million. The decision by the G-7 to shoulder a substantial part of the cost was a significant step towards the launching of the project, but the sum would not suffice to implement it in its entirety. His delegation hoped that all Member States of the Agency understood the need to widen the base of financial participation in the project and requested them to make pledges without delay.

19. With regard to Article VI of the Statute, Italy supported a change that would both increase the number of seats in the Board of Governors and make all Member States eligible for them. It had taken note of the report by the Board of Governors to the General Conference on Article VI and of the report by the Chairman of the Board of Governors on the composition of regional groups, which indicated that the Board was unable to make any recommendation. Italy believed that the expansion of the Board, the composition of regional groups and the criteria for eligibility were interrelated and required a "package" approach. Since the issue could not be easily resolved, it might be useful to set up an ad hoc committee in the near future with a clear mandate to examine the possible alternative solutions.

20. Italy attached considerable importance to the Board's decision on 15 May 1997 to adopt the Model Additional Protocol to comprehensive safeguards agreements, which would strengthen the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. From the very beginning, Italy had acknowledged the importance of the work carried out under Programme 93+2 with the aim of giving the Agency more effective instruments for preventing nuclear proliferation. During Italy's presidency of the European Union, his country had done its utmost to reach an acceptable political compromise on the most controversial matters, such as universality and guarantees of national sovereignty. Together with the other countries in the European Union, Italy had undertaken an analysis of the new obligations contained in the Model Additional Protocol in order to make sure that they were compatible with obligations under the EURATOM Treaty.

21. Italy had undertaken, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels (through the European Union's recent participation in KEDO), to contribute in a practical way, including financially, to the stabilization process on the Korean Peninsula. It was convinced that those steps would enable it to make an important contribution to peace in Asia. Nonetheless, Italy expected the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the obligations it had assumed under its safeguards agreement with the Agency and to allow the Agency to carry out its tasks fully.

22. Emphasizing the fact that the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management adopted in September 1997 was the first international instrument to deal with radioactive waste disposal, he said that Italy was convinced that promoting a nuclear safety culture, which was the main aim of the Convention, would help to solve the energy problems of the developing countries.

23. Turning to the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, he said Italy considered that those two instruments would also improve the nuclear safety regime. As a country that posed no risk of nuclear accident, Italy had always advocated an international system designed to protect the potential victims of such an accident.

24. In conclusion, he wished to convey warm greetings to the future Director General of the Agency, Mr. ElBaradei, who, he was sure, would ensure that the Agency remained one of the best-run international organizations. In carrying out his demanding duties, he would be able to count on Italy's full support.

Mr. Al-Ghais (Kuwait) took the Chair.

25. Mr. VOSKANIAN (Armenia) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Eastern European Group commending Mr. Blix on his outstanding work during his 16 years' leadership of the Agency. It also associated itself with the congratulations addressed to Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General, and welcomed Burkina Faso and Malta on their admission to the Agency.

26. He once again expressed his Government's gratitude for the Agency's considerable assistance before and after the reopening of the Medzamor nuclear power plant. The enormous work done by experts of various countries who had visited the power plant was much appreciated.

27. The Armenian delegation commended the Secretariat on the efforts which had led to the adoption in May of the Model Additional Protocol. Armenia had always supported measures aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system, and had been the first country with a nuclear power plant to sign an additional protocol on 29 September, which, pending its ratification by Parliament, would be applied provisionally in accordance with its Article 17.

28. Armenia welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and hoped that it would enter into force in the near future. It also welcomed the establishment of a comprehensive international nuclear liability regime through the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. However, the present formula for the calculation of contributions placed a heavy burden on the economy of a number of countries, particularly those of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It was regrettable that the proposals put forward several times to set a special ceiling for the contributions of States with a relatively high installed nuclear capacity but a low per capita GDP had not been accepted.

29. The Government of Armenia did its best to fulfil its financial obligations and, in spite of its budgetary constraints, had managed to find the resources to pay the amount necessary for the restoration of its voting rights.

30. On 24 September, the Armenian Parliament had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety with an overwhelming majority of votes. Armenia had thus reaffirmed its commitment to continue to improve nuclear safety at its nuclear facilities and to hold discussions with neighbouring countries on the necessary exchange of information.

31. The Armenian Government was also determined to ensure that the Medzamor nuclear power plant had the highest levels of safety. It was currently implementing the safety measures on the list that had been drawn up before the reopening of the plant. The Nuclear Safety Advisory Council, which was directly responsible to the President's Office, met regularly to monitor the implementation of those measures.

32. Various safety measures which received multilateral support (particularly from the Agency and TACIS) as well as bilateral support were being implemented. One of the most recent was the arrangement between the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of Armenia for the exchange of technical information and co-operation in the area of nuclear safety, which had been signed by the two countries on 30 September.

33. A number of Agency technical co-operation projects were being carried out in Armenia to improve different aspects of nuclear safety. Those projects covered specifically environmental radiation, occupational radiation protection, assessment of the operational safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant and monitoring around it, the radioactive waste management system, the radiation protection infrastructure and the seismic safety re-evaluation of the power plant.

34. The Government of Armenia was extremely interested in improving the training of the nuclear specialists who operated the power plant, as well as the personnel of the national regulatory bodies, and appreciated the Agency's special efforts to that end. A protocol for a joint project (covering training, seismic studies and emergency planning) was about to be signed by the heads of the regulatory bodies of Armenia and Turkey.

35. Armenia highly appreciated the assistance given by the Agency in strengthening its national legislation. A law on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which was expected to be adopted by the National Assembly by the end of the year, was at present being discussed by the Government.

36. The Armenian Government was working in close co-operation with the Agency's Department of Technical Co-operation on the implementation of approved projects. His delegation was holding consultations with the representatives of other countries and with various Divisions of the Agency and trusted that those consultations would bring positive results.

37. Mr. BULBULA (Ethiopia) paid tribute to Mr. Blix, whose skilful leadership had enabled the Agency to achieve the objectives set out in its Statute. He also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his election to the post of Director General and assured him of Ethiopia's full support.

38. In the 40 years of its existence, the Agency had achieved one of its main objectives: the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Among the achievements of global significance was the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa and the adoption of three legal instruments in 1997.

39. The United Nations Special Initiative on Africa should enhance the continent's development and prevent it from being marginalized in the twenty-first century. Despite its resource limitations, the Agency should play a greater role in the continent's development efforts.

40. The Ethiopian Government, through the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, was embarking on co-operation programmes with the Agency which were fully consistent with the new directions. Although Ethiopia was categorized as a least developed country, it now placed less emphasis on infrastructural capacity building and more on programmes and projects of socio-economic relevance. In doing so, it was designing fewer programmes, but they were ones that had greater impact and were better directed towards end-users.

41. Stressing the importance of the transfer of management skills, he noted that the Agency's most useful activities included its efforts in controlling and eradicating livestock diseases, such as trypanosomiasis, through the sterile-insect technique, isotope hydrology for groundwater development and geothermal resources development and management. Ethiopia also received Agency assistance in the area of nutritional improvement and was now able to assess micronutrient deficiencies using isotope techniques. It therefore supported the strengthening of the Agency's programme in that area for the period 1999 to 2000. Ethiopia was an ardent supporter of the regional programmes for Africa, particularly AFRA, and participated in various Model Projects. Indeed, the most meaningful relationship between Member States and the Agency was in the area of technical co-operation.

42. Co-operation between the Agency and Ethiopia had strengthened markedly in recent years and, thanks to the Country Programme Framework approach, took greater account of national development plans. The Agency's technical co-operation activities over the past 40 years, particularly in the fields of health, diagnostic techniques, infrastructure development, animal health and nutrition, and water resources had been commendable. Ethiopia was doing everything possible to meet the Agency's standards in the area of radiation safety and to that end had drawn up a radiation protection policy and set up an authority responsible for its implementation.

43. To commemorate the Agency's fortieth anniversary, the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, which was the focal point for Agency-supported programmes, would be issuing a special bulletin in April 1998 highlighting the achievements in the area of co-operation and, during the same month, Ethiopia would be hosting the ninth technical working group meeting of AFRA.

44. Mr. YENNIMATAS (Greece), having endorsed the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries, congratulated the Director General who, after 16 years of successful leadership, would soon be leaving the Agency. While emphasizing the Agency's important role as the main international organization responsible for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, he also welcomed the new Director General of the Agency, Mr. ElBaradei, whose talents and long experience of the Agency's affairs would enable him to lead the Agency successfully up to the year 2000 and beyond. Mr. ElBaradei could count on Greece's full support.

45. Looking back on the past year and particularly the past few months, he noted a number of important results, including the conclusion of the Model Additional Protocol to strengthen the safeguards system, the implementation of new procedures for the preparation and review of safety standards, the Model Project concept for technical co-operation projects, the negotiation of new legal instruments relating to nuclear safety and the conclusion of a new convention on the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management, as well as the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

46. In May, after long negotiations, the Board had approved the Model Additional Protocol, which would facilitate the adoption of new measures to strengthen the effectiveness and increase the efficiency of safeguards. Greece had contributed to the drafting of the Model Protocol because it considered that universal agreement on the importance of non-proliferation and an effective and credible safeguards system were increasingly necessary in the new political environment of the post-Cold War era. It wished to support all efforts aimed at combating vigorously the risks of proliferation. There was no doubt that nuclear proliferation, apart from being a clear danger to the security of the planet, could jeopardize the ability of States to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

47. The Greek Government supported all efforts being made to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. It also supported the establishment of the International Physical Protection Advisory Service, which would advise Member States on improving their national nuclear security systems. He hoped that the service would be extended to enable Member States to be equipped with the proper means for controlling nuclear material and radiation sources.

48. The Agency played a primary role in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The two treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and South East Asia, which had been signed in 1996, entrusted the Agency with the task of verifying compliance by the signatories.

49. Agency verification of nuclear material removed from weapon programmes was a further disarmament measure. However there was a need to make further progress in that field. Additional regional arrangements for non-proliferation were necessary to bring stability at regional level. The conclusion of a treaty to end the production of fissile material for weapons purposes was one of the most important disarmament objectives. The Agency's role should be further expanded to ensure that verification measures were also developed and applied in nuclear-weapon States.

50. The Greek Government believed that intensive negotiations should be held between the Agency's Secretariat and the Provisional Secretariat of the CTBTO in order to enable the two organizations to co-operate fully in their fields of competence. Such co-operation would be beneficial to the CTBTO and also to non-proliferation in general.

51. Greece had already ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which had entered into force for his country a few days previously. It would accordingly be able to participate in future peer review meetings. Appropriate laws had also been passed in 1996 and 1997 to harmonize national legislation with that of the European Union. Funds had been allocated to the Greek Atomic Energy Commission to install a nationwide automatic system for measuring environmental radioactivity.

52. Greece had actively participated in the negotiations for the conclusion of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. However, it regretted that agreement had not been reached on enlarging the Convention's scope to include reprocessing facilities.

53. Greece believed that the Agency's technical co-operation programme was important for the developing countries. It had therefore made its technical facilities available to the Agency for the training of scientists and organization of technical seminars. While appreciating the initiatives taken by the Secretariat, it felt that a further effort was needed to improve the global effectiveness of technical co-operation activities.

54. Efficient control of exports of nuclear and non-nuclear material and nuclear-related dual-use items was an additional means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and of further strengthening the Agency's safeguards system. Greece, which participated fully in the control mechanism established for that purpose, required comprehensive safeguards as a condition of nuclear supply. In doing so, it believed that such a control mechanism was not discriminatory and had not been established in order to dictate trade rules, but mainly to prevent proliferation and provide guarantees that exports were intended for purely peaceful purposes. It urged those States which exported nuclear and other materials or were involved in the transit of such materials to adopt those arrangements in order to assist the international efforts to combat non-proliferation and strengthen the Agency's safeguards.

55. As in previous years, his delegation wished to comment on the recruitment of Professional staff members. He noted with regret that the number of Professional staff from the countries of Western Europe, and in particular from Greece, had been continually falling over the past years. The resolutions adopted almost every year by the General Conference concerning personnel matters had had no effect as far as Greece was concerned. While recognizing the difficulties facing the Director General in the matter of recruitment, he invited him to pay more attention to the qualifications of the personnel to be recruited and to the justified complaints of some Member States.

56. In conclusion, Greece approved the Agency's Annual Report for 1996 and the Budget for 1998. He hoped that the new Director General would make every effort to enable the Agency to carry out its functions as efficiently and effectively as possible, taking into account

the financial difficulties of the majority of Member States. Greece would continue to promote compliance with the principles of non-proliferation and the strengthening of the Agency's tasks in the areas of safeguards, disarmament and safety, taking due account of the needs of developing countries.

57. Mr. BOERSNER STEDER (Venezuela), having welcomed the new Member States of the Agency, Malta and Burkina Faso, said that the forty-first session of the General Conference had particular importance for all the participants for two reasons. Firstly, it marked the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the Agency, an organization which had carried out effective work to promote peace, nuclear safety, peaceful uses of atomic energy and the spread of nuclear techniques which contributed to progress in developing countries. As the outgoing Director General had said in his memorable speech at the opening of the session, that work had not been completed and the Agency would continue to play a useful role in the future as a force for security and co-operation in the field of nuclear energy. The Venezuelan Government had sent a message to that effect to the President of the General Conference.

58. Secondly, the current session of the General Conference coincided with the imminent end of the current Director General's term of office and the final appointment of his successor. For 16 years, Mr. Hans Blix had carried out his tasks admirably. Venezuela, like other countries in Latin America and the developing world, had always greatly appreciated and unreservedly supported his actions, which were both energetic and characterized by a sense of human solidarity. He was pleased that the General Conference had decided to confer the title of Director General Emeritus upon him and sincerely wished him every happiness and success in the years to come. For the first time, the developing world was going to take on responsibility for directing the Agency through his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, whose experience and exceptional qualities were greatly appreciated. On behalf of Venezuela, he offered him his warmest congratulations and best wishes for success, and expressed his willingness to co-operate with him.

59. As in previous years, Mr. Blix had skilfully summarized in his introductory statement the results achieved by the Agency over the past year. Venezuela supported the ideas he had presented and welcomed his report.

60. Venezuela attached particular importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities and had accordingly followed closely the process of restructuring in the Department of Technical Co-operation. It hoped that the new system in place since 1 September would contribute to greater efficiency in the implementation of programmes. In that connection, he wished to mention the useful projects which were being implemented in Venezuela under the auspices of the Agency and with its co-operation. As the Director General had indicated, the Model Project VEN/8/010 entitled "Groundwater Resources in the Caracas Valley" was continuing to be implemented successfully and was helping to achieve a long-term solution to the chronic water supply problem in the capital, which had expanded dramatically over recent decades. There was no doubt that that project could serve as a model for other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as other developing regions.

61. Venezuela was participating in 10 regional ARCAL projects and 11 national projects relating to nuclear medicine, radiopharmaceutical production, veterinary science, agricultural development, the industrial applications of nuclear techniques, environmental protection and training in nuclear analytical techniques. Of all the ARCAL projects, the one entitled "Tracer Techniques in Dam Leakage" deserved special mention. It had entered the operational phase, and the responsibility for its implementation fell mainly upon Venezuelan technicians, who greatly appreciated the invaluable contributions made by the Agency's experts.

62. It should be noted that certain projects which had encountered initial difficulties in implementation had been modified jointly by Agency experts and Venezuelan technicians and were now producing very promising results, such as project VEN/5/018 entitled "Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Pepper". In addition, the Nuclear Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Energy and Mines was modernizing its project management and training system in order to make optimum use of the resources supplied by the IAEA.

63. Venezuela was also paying great attention to the issue of nuclear safety and therefore welcomed the drawing up of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management as well as the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage. It also welcomed the Nuclear Safety Review 1997 (GC(41)/INF/5 and Add.1).

64. Radioactive waste processing had become a priority for Venezuela, which had undertaken to build a large storage facility for radioactive sources withdrawn from use, which would comply with international safety standards and the most recent Agency recommendations. All users of substances and equipment that generated ionizing radiation were obliged to observe the national radiological safety standards which had been published and to have trained staff, radiation detectors and suitable emergency procedures.

65. With regard to the delicate and complex question of the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, he reaffirmed his delegation's support for an expansion of the Board of Governors to ensure more democratic representation of all regions and, in particular, equitable representation of developing countries. Among the proposals drawn up during the past year, it welcomed the one which had been presented by Sudan. It hoped that it would be possible, during the current session, to achieve an equitable solution which would be satisfactory for all the Member States so that an end could finally be put to a discussion which had continued for too long.

66. With regard to Agency personnel matters, Venezuela welcomed the gradual improvement in the representation of developing countries and of women.

67. His delegation was keen to reaffirm its unreserved support for all the Agency's work. To turn that support into positive action, Venezuela had made considerable efforts and had made the sacrifices needed internally to settle its arrears to both the Agency and the other bodies of the United Nations at the same time. Nevertheless, given that the global economic changes of recent years had tended to reduce many developing countries' ability to pay (even if only temporarily), the Agency should be lenient towards certain developing countries,

particularly the poorest, which were behind with their contributions despite their evident goodwill. In particular, the arrears of those Member States should under no circumstances be punished by a reduction in or suspension of the technical assistance provided.

Mr. Niewodniczański (Poland) resumed the Chair.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (resumed)
(GC(41)/6)

68. The PRESIDENT invited the General Conference to proceed with a vote by secret ballot to fill the second seat for Africa.

69. A secret ballot was held to fill the second seat for Africa.

70. The PRESIDENT, noting that the counting of votes would take some time, suggested that the General Conference resume the general debate until the results could be announced.

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

71. Ms. TOLLE (Kenya), having congratulated Malta and Burkina Faso on their admission to the Agency, noted that the current session marked a milestone in the Agency's history. It was celebrating its fortieth anniversary and, at the same time, Mr. ElBaradei was called upon to succeed Mr. Blix, who had shown exemplary dedication in his service to the Agency for 16 years, and whose initiatives in technical co-operation, especially in Kenya, and efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, to implement the safeguards system and to minimize the risks which nuclear energy posed to life, health and the environment, would always be remembered.

72. After the discovery of radioactivity nearly a century ago, the discovery of nuclear fission had opened up new prospects for both peaceful and destructive uses of nuclear energy. The use of ionizing radiation and radioactive substances had spread widely into various sectors of economic life. However, the continued existence of nuclear weapons posed a very grave threat to international peace and security, which was exacerbated by the existence of large stocks of fissile material that were always vulnerable to theft and by the possibility of accidents at nuclear power plants. Bearing in mind the transboundary impact that nuclear accidents could have, they could not be considered as a purely national problem.

73. With regard to illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources, Kenya greatly appreciated the way in which the Agency had tackled the problem with the support of its Member States and reiterated its support for the programme launched in 1997 to create a database, to improve the physical protection and monitoring of nuclear material in Member States, to implement border control measures and to facilitate the adoption by Member States of basic safety standards pertaining to illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

74. Her Government considered that, in order to guarantee nuclear safety in the world of the future, only the clear, fair and transparent application of safeguards would make it possible to detect violations and to take strict measures in cases of failure to adhere to commitments. Furthermore, it was convinced that all internationally adopted safeguards measures should be implemented in strict compliance with the legal framework set up by the Agency's Statute and other relevant instruments. It was of the utmost importance that all States should make all their nuclear activities transparent by declaring their nuclear material inventories and by allowing the correctness and completeness of their declarations to be verified. In that regard, she congratulated the Agency on the progress achieved in enforcing measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards within the context of Programme 93+2, which would facilitate the accounting for and control of nuclear material, facilities that had been decommissioned and shut down, and fuel cycles.

75. In order to give collective initiatives on non-proliferation and the total elimination of nuclear weapons a chance of success, it was vital to put a stop to the fabrication and use of fissile material for nuclear weapons production. In that regard, she called for the start of negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material intended for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

76. As a peace-loving country, Kenya supported all international initiatives promoting nuclear disarmament. While there was reason to welcome the progress achieved in that respect, and particularly the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the indefinite extension of the NPT and the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, it was necessary to recognize that those developments in themselves were not sufficient to achieve a total elimination of nuclear weapons. It was therefore imperative that negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons be pursued as a matter of highest priority. In that context, her Government had welcomed the adoption of the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly in September 1996 and the subsequent establishment of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. It was happy to note that the Commission's Provisional Technical Secretariat, set up in spring 1997, had made every effort to achieve progress in its future co-operation with the Agency. Those were important signs of the international community's commitment to the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation. Kenya would contribute to those efforts by continuing its active participation in the seismic and radionuclide monitoring system established within the framework of the CTBT. It reiterated its full support for the implementation scheme for the Agency's safeguards system, which provided for increased access to information relating to nuclear technology and activities in States, while also taking account of the principle of national sovereignty.

77. The Agency's performance over the past year was as commendable as in previous years and had enabled Member States to derive maximum benefits from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which the technical co-operation programme was helping to promote. Since the adoption of the Model Project concept, technical co-operation was increasingly being focused on end-users, which was enhancing the socio-economic impact of nuclear energy applications. The success of that new concept had given a fresh impetus to the Agency's technical co-operation activities and had resulted in new initiatives: new Model Projects,

Country Programme Frameworks, thematic planning, technical co-operation among developing countries, co-funding and the use of targets and success criteria.

78. The Kenyan delegation was convinced that that approach was likely to produce tangible socio-economic results. Since the technical co-operation programme was increasingly focused on national needs and sustainable development priorities, it would be even more efficient and cost effective. Kenya urged all its partners to give maximum support to that approach in order to achieve one of the Agency's main objectives: to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to development.

79. The United Nations had repeatedly endorsed the principle of technical co-operation among developing countries, which took account of the fact that those countries had differing levels of technological development and which could bring benefits for all the partners if it were applied comprehensively. Kenya, which considered that that approach was particularly well suited to the prevailing climate of budgetary austerity, supported the activities of AFRA at regional and subregional levels. The AFRA programme had enabled strong ties of friendship and co-operation to be established among countries in the region which had similar problems and interests. Through the assistance provided by the Agency within that framework, a number of countries had been able to become partners in development, which had greatly contributed to integration and harmony in that region of the world. Kenya hoped that support for the AFRA programme would be maintained, since previous initiatives had allowed nuclear energy issues in the region to be tackled while taking into account the specific characteristics of individual countries. The AFRA programme promised to be a vital driving force for the future implementation of the Agency's technical co-operation programme.

80. The technical co-operation activities carried out in Kenya had centred mainly on training, technology, agriculture, human and animal health and nuclear safety. For its part, Kenya had made a modest contribution by providing experts and lecturers, training facilities and financial resources. Those activities had greatly contributed to strengthening nuclear technology in Kenya. A unified set of safety standards agreed upon by consensus and provisions for radiation safety in Member States was essential. The promotion of radiation safety had played a very important role in the implementation of nuclear technology in Kenya, ensuring that health and safety conditions for handling, storing and using radiation sources were satisfactory.

81. During the past year, the project on using non-destructive testing techniques for quality control in industry and establishing acceptable standards for Kenya's industrial products had been extended to cover non-destructive testing of concrete structures and certification of the staff carrying out such tests. To achieve that aim, the Kenya Bureau of Standards had drawn up a harmonized national qualification and certification system in collaboration with the ISO and other bodies. Kenya thanked the United States warmly for its help in implementing that important project through the Agency.

82. With regard to research and development, the Institute of Nuclear Science at the University of Nairobi had given help to other institutions by organizing training in the maintenance of scientific instruments and by carrying out analytical work in various fields of

research and development. Through such co-operation, the Institute had become an important centre for training and for disseminating knowledge on nuclear science, analytical techniques and instrumentation in the region. Her delegation was convinced that similar continued co-operation would enhance the Institute's ability to offer advanced training in all the fields of nuclear science and technology which were national priorities.

83. In the area of agriculture, the assistance provided by the Agency within the framework of AFRA had led to the development of new varieties of wheat with improved resistance to drought through induced mutation breeding techniques. Other projects related to the diagnosis and control of animal diseases, the control of the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis in the Lambwe valley, and nitrogen fixation by multi-purpose tree species. With regard to medicine, the Agency's technical co-operation projects had greatly helped to improve the national health care delivery system, especially in the field of diagnostic radiology and radiography. The country's main centres using those techniques were now in a position to pass on the scientific and technical expertise they had acquired to other centres, which should enable the level of care in the country to be significantly improved.

84. Kenya appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat over the previous 15 years to increase the proportion of women working in Professional posts in the Secretariat, which had risen from 11.7% to 18.6%. However, that increase was still too small. She therefore urged the Agency to redouble its efforts to train and recruit competent and qualified women from all regions of the world.

85. With regard to the composition of the Board of Governors, she reiterated the need to increase the size of the Board in line with the draft resolution submitted by the African Group in document GC(41)/COM.5/14.

86. In conclusion, she said that as the new millennium approached, the international community should continue to help the Agency achieve its fundamental objectives, which were to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity and to ensure that the assistance provided either by the Agency itself or under its supervision and control was not used to serve any military purposes.

87. Mr. NIITENBERG (Estonia), having congratulated the Agency on its 40th anniversary and welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as new members, said that his country recognized the Agency's achievements and wished it success in meeting the challenges of the future.

88. It was essential to support fully Parts 1 and 2 of Programme 93+2 as well as all other measures aimed at strengthening the safeguards system, since the proliferation of nuclear technology and trafficking in nuclear materials gave rise to the concern that nuclear weapons could be used by terrorists or irresponsible régimes in some countries. That danger, and not a major nuclear war, was the main threat in the twenty-first century and it was incumbent upon the Agency to deal with that threat and eliminate it. His country's nuclear security policy was based on that understanding and it would be implementing that policy by acceding to international conventions and bilateral agreements and by strengthening the measures against

trafficking in nuclear materials through better surveillance of its borders and by strengthening its customs controls.

89. The Agency's 40-year history had been characterized by various landmarks: the nuclear arms race and the subsequent conclusion of treaties limiting stockpiles of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, the increase in the number of nuclear power plants and the Chernobyl accident. It should not be forgotten that the Agency had contributed to the development of nuclear science in the fields of medicine, agriculture and technology.

90. Although Estonia had only been independent for 7 of the 40 years since the Agency had been established, those 7 years had been marked by a number of different events including its accession to the NPT in 1992, the transfer of the former Soviet military nuclear facility in Paldiski to Estonia in 1995, and the recent adoption of an act establishing the legal framework for radiation practice in the country.

91. Estonia's future tasks would be dictated by the process of integrating the country into the European Union. The absence of a nuclear programme could no longer be used as a reason to justify shortcomings in nuclear legislation once Estonia had become a member of the Union. A safeguards agreement between Estonia and the Agency had been prepared for approval by the Government. The recently adopted radiation act was consistent with the Agency's Basic Safety Standards. However, the harmonization process should go further.

92. Technical co-operation with the Agency or with other countries through the Agency had been very beneficial for Estonia, which recognized the value of the advice given for the decommissioning of the Paldiski nuclear facility and for solving the problems of the handling and disposal of radioactive waste. The feasibility study for a final repository in Estonia, undertaken in co-operation with the Agency, was an important assistance project.

93. While Estonia had no nuclear programme, it was surrounded by countries with nuclear power plants. For that reason, it was interested in regional co-operation through the Working Group on Nuclear and Radiation Safety of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Paldiski International Expert Reference Group, and he thanked those groups for their co-operation and assistance. A project on radon charting in Estonia was running smoothly thanks to the fruitful co-operation of the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute. The recently concluded Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was a solid basis for regional co-operation, particularly in the Baltic.

94. The challenges that Estonia would have to face in the future included the radioactive waste of military origin inherited from the Soviet Union and the lack of final disposal facilities for that waste; uranium mining tailings in the north-east of the country; and the radioactive remnants of two decommissioned submarines. It also had to harmonize its legislation with European Union and EURATOM directives and seek alternatives to its energy policy, without excluding the nuclear power option.

95. In conclusion, he thanked Mr. Blix, the outgoing Director General, and extended his congratulations and best wishes to Mr. ElBaradei, the new Director General. He also thanked the Agency's extremely competent staff.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (resumed)
(GC(41)/6)

96. The PRESIDENT announced the result of the ballot to the General Conference.

97. In the election of the second member from the area of Africa the result was:

<u>Abstentions:</u>	1
<u>Valid votes:</u>	96
<u>Required majority:</u>	49
<u>Votes obtained:</u>	
Ghana	54
Sudan	25
Algeria	13
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	4

98. Having attained the required majority, Ghana was elected to the Board.

99. The PRESIDENT congratulated the 11 members which had just been elected to the Board of Governors. Under Article VI.D of the Statute, they would hold office from the end of the current session of the General Conference to the end of the regular session after next - in other words, to the end of the forty-third regular session in 1999.

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

100. Mr. DAHMANI (Algeria), having welcomed the Conference's approval of Malta and Burkina Faso for Agency membership, paid tribute and expressed his country's gratitude to the Director General, Mr. Blix, for the manner in which he had led the Agency during his terms of office. He also wished every success to the future Director General, Mr. ElBaradei.

101. The Agency's fortieth anniversary conferred special meaning on the activities currently under way and highlighted the extent of the challenges still to be faced. For its part, Algeria would continue to abide completely by the principles enshrined in the Statute. During the past 40 years, the Agency had played an increasingly important role and demonstrated an ability to adapt, remaining sensitive to the needs of developing countries and in particular strengthening

its technical assistance and co-operation activities. In that connection, Algeria was very satisfied with the quality of the assistance provided by the Agency under its technical co-operation programme. His country remained firmly convinced that the Agency's promotional activities, like its other statutory activities, constituted an essential pillar supporting the Agency's efforts in the interests of non-proliferation and the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

102. The technical co-operation programme should be in keeping with the growing needs in the field of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. It was therefore essential that the Model Projects advocated as part of the Agency's new technical assistance approach should respond fully to the priority needs of the developing countries. Algeria was in favour of the Agency's new strategy for designing, implementing and evaluating projects. In Algeria, numerous users of nuclear techniques in sectors as varied as agriculture, water resources management, industry, energy, health, biotechnology and the environment were participating in the formulation of proposals for national projects to be implemented during the next two-year technical co-operation cycle.

103. Like its promotional activities, the Agency's non-proliferation endeavours should be supported. Algeria's support for those endeavours reflected its wish to contribute to the international community's efforts to strengthen peace and security both regionally and globally. Thus, since participating actively in the NPT Review and Extension Conference, his country had taken important non-proliferation steps, first becoming a party to the NPT, then concluding a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency and finally embarking on subsidiary arrangement negotiations, which were due to be concluded very soon. Those steps demonstrated Algeria's wish to strengthen the climate of trust and transparency which now characterized its relations with the Agency.

104. Algeria, which welcomed the establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, would like to see that example of regional denuclearization followed in other regions - especially in the Middle East, where a single country was continuing to block the establishment of such a zone. His country continued to be very concerned about the attitude of Israel, which was still refusing to become a party to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

105. The fact that a consensus solution to the question of enlarging the Board of Governors had still not been found was also a matter of concern to his country. Given its technological potential, Algeria was in favour of enlarging the Board on the basis of an agreement which took into account the aspirations of developing countries, particularly of those in Africa. It accordingly supported the African Group's proposal, which had been welcomed by the Group of 77.

106. With regard to nuclear, radiation and waste safety, Algeria, which had become a party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, would continue to support the other legal instruments developed under the auspices of the Agency and measures being taken by the Agency in that field. It would like to see the Agency make a real contribution to the international

community's efforts to strengthen co-operation directed towards the improvement of safety standards and mechanisms at all stages in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

107. Once its recently created atomic energy authority was firmly in place, Algeria would - as a high priority - examine the question of how best to implement the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. It intended to establish the regulatory and safety-related bodies needed in connection with Agency conventions and in particular with the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the ultimate aim being to have a complete set of national structures for ensuring the fulfilment by Algeria of its commitments in that area.

108. Mr. EL FADHEL KHALIL (Tunisia), having welcomed the admission to the Agency of Malta and Burkina Faso, congratulated the new Director General and paid tribute to his predecessor, said that the adoption of the Additional Protocol to strengthen and consolidate the safeguards system, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and 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 had created a favourable climate for the safe development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

109. That new situation brought with it several obligations for the Agency and also for those Member States which possessed nuclear weapons. Firstly, it was necessary to assure equitable representation of regional groups within the Agency's various organs and, in particular, in the Board of Governors. In that connection, Tunisia supported the African proposal for an amendment of Article VI of the Agency's Statute. Secondly, technical co-operation would need to be intensified in order to strengthen activities in developing countries. Thirdly, safeguards agreements would have to be applied to all countries, especially those which refused to subject their nuclear facilities to conditions of total transparency while benefiting from the application of the same conditions to neighbouring countries. Fourthly, care would have to be taken to ensure that the strengthening of the safeguards system did not place an additional financial burden on countries whose nuclear activities posed no threats.

110. Tunisia had acceded to all conventions relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and enjoyed excellent relations with the Agency in the area of technical co-operation, which had led to the launching of several pilot projects. One such had been the establishment, with the help of France and of the Agency, of a semi-industrial pilot plant for food irradiation, a project which would be completed in the course of 1998.

111. On the regional level, Tunisia had in 1997 hosted a meeting of AFRA national co-ordinators, which had given it an opportunity to strengthen its co-operation with other African countries. In addition, Tunisia played host to the headquarters of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, a technically-oriented body which worked towards the same objectives as the IAEA and with which he urged the Agency to strengthen its co-operative links.

112. Tunisia, which regularly paid its assessed contribution to the Regular Budget, had also paid the voluntary contribution which it had pledged the previous year and would pay the whole of its share of the target for the TCF for 1998.

113. In the coming decades, many of the developing countries, including Tunisia, would not be able to meet their growing energy needs without recourse to nuclear power. In that regard, low- and medium-power reactors seemed well-suited to the consumption patterns of small countries. Tunisia therefore supported the Agency's efforts in that field and hoped to see them pursued and consolidated. The use of such reactors for the production of potable water was of great interest to Tunisia, and accordingly it welcomed the establishment by the Agency of an expert group on water desalination, which included a Tunisian expert.

114. He commended the progress achieved by the international community in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, as witnessed by the strengthening of the safeguards system, the indefinite extension of the NPT and the establishment of the CTBTO, and in that context urged that all Member States should join the NPT.

115. A global and innovative approach was needed in tackling the question of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, from the Middle East. As an African country, Tunisia had been in favour of the denuclearization of that continent. However, several African countries were also in the Middle East, and therefore the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa would not really make sense until such weapons were eliminated from the Middle East as well.

116. Mr. YAMEOGO (Burkina Faso), having paid tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, and congratulated his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, on his election, thanked the Board of Governors and the General Conference for approving Burkina Faso's application for Agency membership. As a Member State, his country would abide by the Agency's Statute, fulfil its obligations and act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, it would endeavour to contribute to peace and sustainable development through close co-operation with the Agency and with other Member States.

117. Mr. ASHEEKE (Namibia), associating himself with the statement made by the Chairman of the African Group, paid tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, for the exemplary manner in which he had guided the work of the Agency over the previous 16 years. He also welcomed the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei as Director General, assuring him of his fullest co-operation, and the new members, Burkina Faso and Malta.

118. On the occasion of the Agency's fortieth anniversary, his country expressed its admiration for the professional work done by the Agency in the areas of non-proliferation and safety, and commended it on its commitment to the utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and sustainable development. In that connection, he was pleased to inform the General Conference that his country had commemorated the Agency's fortieth anniversary by opening the first radiotherapy unit in Namibia, which had been established with considerable assistance from the Agency and the Government of the United States of America.

119. The Agency was playing an important role in the socio-economic development of Namibia, which continued to receive technical assistance from the Agency in the areas of agriculture, water resource management, public health, uranium mining and radiation safety, in particular by providing expert services and equipment and above all by contributing to human resources development, an area that was especially important to Namibia in view of the fact that, prior to independence, the majority of its people had had no opportunities to gain scientific and technical expertise.

120. The Agency's contribution in those technical fields was regarded by his Government as an excellent means of opening up the field of science and technology to young and disadvantaged Namibians. He therefore looked forward to a continued association with the Agency's technical co-operation programme and trusted that the reorganization of the technical co-operation services would enhance their effectiveness and efficiency for the benefit of all. It was, however, a matter of concern that funding for that very successful activity of the Agency had been dwindling, with negative effects on the programmes and projects. He therefore urged Member States to ensure that technical co-operation was funded on a secure and predictable basis.

121. Recalling that his country had committed itself fully to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to the total elimination of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, particularly by signing the Pelindaba Treaty in April 1996, he took pleasure in informing the General Conference that the Namibian Government had approved the safeguards agreement with the Agency, which was currently awaiting ratification by Parliament.

122. With regard to the expansion of the Board of Governors, Namibia was very concerned about Africa's continued under-representation on the Board. That genuine concern should be addressed on its own merit, without being linked to extraneous issues. His delegation appealed to all Member States to correct the situation and to ensure that Africa was fairly represented.

123. Mr. SERVIÁN (Uruguay) said that the celebration of an anniversary was a good opportunity to evaluate what had been achieved and to look to the future. When, 40 years previously, the Agency had been established, the international community had had two major concerns in the nuclear area. One had been the need to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The other had been to ensure that nuclear technologies and materials were not transferred from peaceful to military uses. The threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons had terrorized the entire world. That had given rise to the three main Departments of the Agency: the Department of Research and Isotopes, in which he himself had had the honour of working, the Department of Technical Co-operation and the Department of Safeguards.

124. The Agency had performed its promotional and control responsibilities with exemplary effectiveness while maintaining a remarkable balance, despite strong pressure being exerted in one direction or another. In the past years, the Agency had made a decisive contribution to the creation of a nuclear capacity in the developing countries, while curbing the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thousands of technologists and scientists had been trained,

hundreds of laboratories had been equipped and thousands of projects had been implemented with its assistance. He himself had been the first Uruguayan IAEA fellowship holder.

125. However, times had changed and new lines of action seemed to be required: the quest for greater efficiency, measured in terms of impact in the sectors producing goods and services, and the effort to achieve quality, measured, in particular, in terms of cost/benefit ratios and appropriateness to the real needs of the population of developing countries. The main concern of the Agency and of national nuclear bodies involved radiation protection and nuclear safety bore witness to that change of emphasis. In future, the Agency, national nuclear bodies and nuclear scientists should all endeavour to use the capabilities that had been established in order to resolve real national problems. An appropriate strategy to achieve that end would be to step up efforts to transfer nuclear technologies to national bodies, both public and private, that were capable of using them.

126. He was pleased to note the Agency's great contribution to the establishment of a safety culture through the training of personnel in radiation protection and nuclear safety, the establishment of an international nuclear legal regime and the setting up of dosimetry, calibration and radioactive waste management laboratories in the developing countries.

127. In conclusion, he thanked the Agency's Secretariat for the work it had carried out under the guidance of Mr. Blix and congratulated Mr. ElBaradei.

128. Mr. SIRBUBALO (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his country had already benefited from five technical co-operation projects, including two interregional projects, and that, in spite of the fact that it had joined the Agency only two years previously, co-operation between his Government and the Agency had been very good. His country had participated, to the extent that it was able, in the Agency's permanent activities, particularly in the development of a global safety culture.

129. He expressed his gratitude to the Agency for having shown exceptional understanding of the problems of his country. Human resources development was one of his Government's main goals. Owing to the war, his country's experts had not been able to study the latest scientific publications and had been unable to keep up to date with new achievements and new technologies. The process of continuous education supported by the Agency had enabled Bosnian experts to acquire qualifications which would make them self-sufficient in the management of various production processes in the future.

130. Agency experts had supported the efforts made by his country to develop new legislation in the field of radiation safety in accordance with the Basic Safety Standards. The Agency had also supported his country's work on reviewing and updating the registry of radiation sources, as well as its work on dosimetric monitoring of occupational exposure. One problem, however, remained unsolved, namely the country's inability to control movements of radioactive materials across its frontiers. Such support and co-operation was of great importance and could make a very valuable contribution to the Agency's efforts in other countries with similar problems.

131. He emphasized his country's dedication to the Agency and its goals and expressed his gratitude to it for its efforts to assist his country and involve it in Agency activities. The Agency and the Secretariat deserved particular commendation for what they had done over the past 40 years to strengthen the Agency as an instrument of international safety.

132. In conclusion, he conveyed his respect and gratitude to Mr. Blix for the remarkable way he had guided the Agency and wished him all the best for the future. The future Director General, Mr. ElBaradei, could be assured of his country's full support and co-operation.

133. Mr. MICHAELIDES (Cyprus), having welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as new members of the Agency, said that the current session of the General Conference was marked by two events of particular importance: first, the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Agency's establishment and secondly the changeover in its leadership.

134. Over the 40 years of its existence, the Agency had spared no effort to promote and to guarantee the safe use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The results it had achieved were truly remarkable. Congratulating the Agency on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, he expressed the conviction that it would continue in the future to fulfil its important role with equal success, for the benefit of mankind. He also thanked Mr. Blix for the outstanding dedication and competence with which he had directed the Agency over the past 16 years, and wished him every success for the future. In addition, he extended his congratulations and best wishes to the incoming Director General, Mr. ElBaradei, and assured him of his delegation's full support and co-operation. He also congratulated Mr. Peter Walker on the outstanding way in which he had directed the work of the Board of Governors.

135. Associating himself with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, he said that Cyprus, which regarded the NPT as the most important international legal instrument for ensuring global security, the prevention of nuclear proliferation and nuclear disarmament, had supported the decision to extend the Treaty for an indefinite period, and urged all States to accede to it so that it could become truly universal.

136. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was another decisive step on the road towards non-proliferation. Cyprus, which was proud to be among those States which had signed the Treaty, had already taken steps towards its ratification and strongly urged all States to join it in signing that extremely important international legal instrument.

137. Cyprus welcomed the establishment of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission in Vienna. It was now important to intensify efforts through bilateral and multilateral negotiations with a view to reaching a speedy agreement on a treaty to halt the production of fissile materials for military purposes.

138. Cyprus endorsed the Agency's activities relating to the application of safeguards to nuclear materials and supported efforts to strengthen further and improve the safeguards system, which was an integral part of the global non-proliferation regime. In that connection, he recalled that a safeguards agreement pursuant to the NPT had been concluded between Cyprus and the IAEA in 1972 and ratified a year later. Cyprus therefore welcomed the

adoption in May of that year of the Model Additional Protocol, which was designed to strengthen the efficiency of the safeguards system.

139. The Agency's technical co-operation programme was of great importance for Cyprus and Cyprus therefore supported the efforts being made to improve its quality. Cyprus had participated, and was still participating, in a number of national and regional Agency technical co-operation projects, and also provided the Agency with the services of its experts. Thus, very close co-operation had been established with the various Departments of the Agency, especially in the areas of radiation protection and the medical applications of nuclear energy. Since the Chernobyl accident, that collaboration had been further strengthened, enabling Cyprus to develop the infrastructure and expertise needed to deal with such an event in the future.

140. International co-operation was needed if the problem of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials was to be overcome. To that end, Cyprus had recently started participating in the Agency's database on illicit trafficking, was taking steps to sign and ratify the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and was also considering accession to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Furthermore, it was in the process of setting up a multidisciplinary team to combat illicit trafficking and hoped that by the end of 1997 it would be in a position to collaborate fully in international efforts to combat the problem.

141. Mr. NYANDA (United Republic of Tanzania), after congratulating Malta and Burkina Faso on their admission to the Agency, said that in the course of the 40 years of its existence the Agency had accomplished its missions with remarkable success, largely due to the skills of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, under whom a dedicated Secretariat had discharged its duties with great ability. He congratulated Mr. Blix on his distinguished service to the Agency and wished him happiness, health and prosperity in the future.

142. His delegation also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his well deserved appointment to the difficult post of Director General. He would be taking over the leadership of an organization which enjoyed an excellent reputation and whose Member States were united in their determination to ensure development through the peaceful use of nuclear energy, while ensuring safety and security through the application of the requisite safeguards. Judging by Mr. ElBaradei's curriculum vitae, there could be no doubt that he would succeed in ensuring that the Agency concentrated with even greater determination on its principal areas of activity, while responding flexibly to the new challenges it would have to face. His delegation therefore wished him every success in his extremely demanding task and also commended the Board of Governors on the transparency, impartiality and strictness with which it had conducted the selection and appointment process.

143. His country was extremely satisfied with the significant results achieved in the course of the Agency's 40 years of existence, as well as with the fruitful co-operation that had existed between the Agency and the United Republic of Tanzania since the latter had become a member in 1976. As a result of that co-operation, his country had not only achieved many successes in the field of the use of nuclear techniques, but had also established a sound national radiation protection infrastructure and would be in a position that year to announce

the complete eradication of tsetse-fly from the Island of Zanzibar, which should open the way to spectacular agricultural development. In addition, Member States, thanks to the Agency and other bodies, had managed to halt, at least temporarily, horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Prospects for implementation of an effective and verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, leading at the very least to talks on total nuclear disarmament, were becoming more and more favourable.

144. The increase in the demand for energy, particularly in the developing countries and even in LDCs such as the United Republic of Tanzania, meant that nuclear energy, in the light of the increasing concern for the environment, would remain a significant source of power and would contribute appreciably to alleviating the greenhouse effect. It was for that reason that his delegation wished to emphasize that countries should make a proper review of the role of nuclear energy and that the issue should continue to be debated at international level. In that regard, the Agency's Secretariat should pursue its efforts to promote a proper appreciation of the contribution that nuclear energy could make to sustainable development. The United Republic of Tanzania wished the Agency to extend the scope of its activities in the promotion of the use of nuclear power and in related safety procedures, particularly in the developing countries. The intensification of research and development work on small, low-cost units with a high intrinsic safety level was a step in the right direction.

145. His delegation wished again to express its deep gratitude for the technical assistance provided to the United Republic of Tanzania. It greatly appreciated the results achieved in 1997 in Africa under the technical co-operation programme, results which were entirely consistent with the objectives of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa. Those achievements confirmed the Agency's commitment to support, on the basis of guidelines set by its Member States, the endeavours of developing countries, particularly in Africa, to accelerate the process of technology transfer and to achieve sustainable development. His delegation emphasized the need to put funding for technical co-operation on a sound footing in order to enable the Department of Technical Co-operation to plan its future programmes. It also appreciated the Agency's efforts to increase the effectiveness of its technical co-operation activities. The very commendable initiatives taken in that context included the introduction of concepts such as Model Projects, Partners in Development, and Country Programme Frameworks. Further consultations on the basis of the Country Programme Frameworks should be useful in ensuring that technical co-operation funds were used in the most cost-effective way possible, and that appropriate projects were selected for developing countries.

146. The support that the Agency was giving to regional initiatives such as ARCAL, the RCA and AFRA, as well as to the regional projects under its technical co-operation programme, clearly showed its keen interest in encouraging and strengthening regional co-operation. Such initiatives, which would ultimately make it possible to ensure optimal use of the limited available resources and would have a positive impact on science and technology in participating countries, should be encouraged.

147. The United Republic of Tanzania greatly valued the strenuous efforts made by the Agency and its Member States to increase the efficiency of safeguards and noted with appreciation the endorsement of the Model Protocol, which would give the Agency additional powers. However, if the new strengthened safeguards system was to be effective, it would have to be applied without discrimination to all parties to the NPT. The new system should also be a new incentive to nuclear-weapons States to accelerate efforts towards total nuclear disarmament.

148. There was an urgent need for the Agency to reorient its long-term policy in order to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century and better mechanisms should be developed for setting priorities and strengthening activities for achieving those priorities within the limits of available resources. He called on Member States to support the Agency in those efforts.

149. The United Republic of Tanzania believed that there was need for a better balance between the Agency's regulatory and promotional activities. The majority of Member States, particularly those in the course of development, expected tangible results from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in support of their development programmes. However, Agency activities to promote the beneficial uses of nuclear energy did not currently seem to be accorded the same importance as regulatory activities. It was to be hoped that the Agency would soon succeed in striking a balance between the two. After all, no one would wish to see a situation in which the developing countries began to question the advantages of membership of an organization whose activities were essentially regulatory.

150. Mr. TWAL (Jordan), after congratulating the new Director General and paying tribute to his predecessor, said that the Agency had strengthened international co-operation in the field of nuclear technology through the drawing up of conventions such as the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Those measures were particularly essential as nuclear activities and tests, accidents and the various peaceful applications of nuclear energy had resulted in an accumulation of radioactive waste over the years that had become a source of environmental pollution. The Agency was also called upon to take advantage of the peace process in the Middle East in order to establish its safeguards system in the region, make it a nuclear-weapon-free zone and eliminate from it all weapons of mass destruction.

151. With regard to technical co-operation, he emphasized the importance of developing human resources in the developing countries, particularly in relation to the maintenance and repair of nuclear equipment. In that connection, it might be useful to set up regional centres to strengthen the relevant national capabilities. In order to preserve the Department of Technical Co-operation's efficiency and flexibility, the financing of technical co-operation should not come under the Agency's Regular Budget. It was to be hoped that the technical co-operation budget would be increased constantly and consistently.

152. Potable water was one of the main problems facing the developing countries: it was a rare commodity, and the shortage was aggravated by increasing demand due to population growth and economic development. The desalination of sea water was one of the possible options and Jordan was in favour of plans to produce potable water economically by nuclear methods and considered that it would be even more appropriate to use nuclear reactors to produce both electricity and potable water.

153. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, the need for equitable representation of the regions of Africa and the Middle East and South Asia on the Board of Governors was all the more inescapable as the Member States of those regions had made significant progress in the nuclear field. He therefore hoped that a definitive decision would be taken at the current session of the General Conference.

154. The Arab Atomic Energy Agency, which had its headquarters in Tunis, was a regional body providing scientific and technical services in the field of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. However, the volume and quality of assistance provided were limited by the lack of financial resources. Jordan therefore called on the Agency to increase its support to that body.

155. He appealed to all Member States to pay their contributions on time and noted that his country had paid its contribution for 1997 and was preparing to fulfil all its financial obligations to the Agency by paying its contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF for 1998.

156. Mr. ROMAN-MOREY (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean), congratulated Mr. Blix, on behalf of the OPANAL Council, very warmly on his effective leadership of the Agency over the past 16 years, a period which, after the terror of the Cold War in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, had been marked by extremely positive results in the nuclear field. International disarmament agreements concluded during that period had only been possible because they had gone hand in hand with the promotion of the controlled and verifiable use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, which was the Agency's main task. He recalled that nuclear energy had become known to the public in the most disastrous way possible. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not only produced hundreds of thousands of victims, but had also destroyed the image of a wonderful form of energy which should only have been used for the good of humanity. In the 40 years of its existence, the Agency had served to rebuild part of that image.

157. The Tlatelolco Treaty had been the first international instrument to express the sovereign will of its parties never to possess nuclear weapons, while emphasizing the need to use nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes in their region, and had defined mechanisms for collaboration with the Agency in carrying out tasks relating to safeguards and nuclear safety.

158. The Tlatelolco Treaty would not have been complete without the full participation of those States in the region which were the most developed in the nuclear field. With the firm political will of the States concerned, and thanks to the constant support of the Agency and

the personal participation of Mr. Blix, significant amendments had been made to the initial text of the Treaty. The personal efforts made by Mr. Blix and his colleagues, together with the Secretariat General of OPANAL, had also made it possible for the Tlatelolco Treaty to be the first international treaty to express and implement, in all countries of the region with one exception, the will of the parties never to possess nuclear weapons. The region could proudly declare that it had been the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world and its example had been followed by others. The Rarotonga Treaty for the South Pacific, the Bangkok Treaty for South East Asia and the Pelindaba Treaty for Africa meant that a total of 110 countries had undertaken not to use nuclear energy for military purposes. Furthermore, other regions of the world had taken initiatives to set up such zones, and OPANAL and the Agency had an important role to play in that respect.

159. He particularly thanked Mr. Blix for the support he had given to the Secretariat General of OPANAL in organizing the regional seminar on nuclear safeguards held in Kingston (Jamaica) in 1996 and also for his constant assistance. On the occasion of his retirement, the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean offered him their gratitude and warmest appreciation, and their best wishes for a long life, success and happiness.

160. On behalf of OPANAL, he also warmly congratulated the future Director General, Mr. ElBaradei, on his election. His great organizational qualities, his recognized diplomatic and legal prestige and his considerable experience of the Agency would ensure that his efforts were crowned with success.

161. On 14 February 1997, OPANAL had celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its founding. The main events organized in honour of that anniversary had been a seminar on nuclear-weapon-free zones in the next century, co-sponsored by OPANAL, the Mexican Government and UNIDIR, and a special commemorative session of the OPANAL General Conference. For the first time in the history of OPANAL, all the signatory States, associated States, and States and international organizations with observer status had been represented.

162. Reviewing the main measures adopted at the fifteenth ordinary session of the OPANAL General Conference held in July 1997 in Mexico, he said that the most important had been the decision to continue to seek new activities to be carried out by OPANAL within the framework of the mandate given to it by the Tlatelolco Treaty, taking account of current world realities and, in particular, the increasing desire of the international community to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones.

163. A new era was beginning, the world was continuing to change and the action taken by the international community through the intermediary of its regional or international institutions had to be decisive. As Mr. ElBaradei had said in his statement, the peaceful use of nuclear energy contributed effectively to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the Agency might one day be able to verify the total elimination of weapons throughout the world.

164. Mr. BARAKAT (Arab Atomic Energy Agency) said that his organization, which had its headquarters in Tunis, focused its activities on improving human resources in the field of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Its work was mainly conducted in Arabic

and included the organization of training programmes, symposia, expert meetings and seminars, as well as the publication of scientific documents on the various aspects of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

165. The Arab Atomic Energy Agency co-operated with the IAEA, as shown by the organization of a nine-week training course on radiation protection in Arabic, which was soon to be held in Damascus. In that connection, he emphasized the importance of the use of Arabic in training programmes. At present, the Arab Atomic Energy Agency was co-operating with the IAEA in connection with a programme for developing a standard set of regulations in Arabic for radiation protection, which would be the subject of an Arab expert meeting in December 1997.

166. Recalling that representatives of his organization had participated in the work of the expert advisory groups on small- and medium-power reactors and the nuclear desalination of sea water, he noted that the IAEA attended the conferences of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency and that the two organizations exchanged publications. He welcomed that co-operation and hoped to see it further strengthened.

167. Mr. HEZZAH (League of Arab States) said that the League, which was linked to the Agency by a co-operation agreement, was working tirelessly to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It called on the international community to support its efforts and on Israel to accede to the NPT without delay and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, prior to the denuclearization of the Middle East, which would help strengthen peace in the region. The Agency's Director General was therefore requested to increase his contacts with the countries of the region in order to accelerate that process.

168. He hoped that the Agency would continue to contribute further to international security by strengthening the safeguards system and verification activities and through international co-operation in the area of nuclear safety and radioactive waste disposal. He also hoped that the Agency's role in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and in technical assistance would be strengthened.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.