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on Wednesday, 29 September 1999, at 3.10 p.m.

President: Mr. KADRI (Algeria)
Later: Mr. ADAM (Belgium)
Mr. Ki-Moon BAN (Republic of Korea)
Mr. SOERIAATMADJA (Indonesia)

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Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
MERCOSUR	Southern Cone Common Market
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
MOX	Mixed oxide
NPP	Nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
TC	Technical co-operation
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UN	United Nations
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (former USSR)
Y2K	Year 2000

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GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998 (continued)
(GC (43)/4)

1. Mr. FRANK (Israel), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that although the General Conference's agenda was well balanced and covered most of the important issues relevant to the Agency's technical mission, two draft resolutions stood out as extraneous to the Agency's Statute and mission, both of them concerning the Middle East. In contrast, one central issue was being dealt with only in the Scientific Forum, and not by the General Conference, namely the future role of nuclear power and the Agency's role in its objective assessment. That point was worth dwelling on.

2. In view of the need for a sustainable energy future with less dependence on fossil sources and the operating experience accumulated with nuclear power reactors, the role of nuclear power might be expected to increase in the future. Current projections, however, indicated the contrary. In his address on nuclear power presented in Paris in May 1999, the Director General had aptly summarized the current trends and the factors to be taken into account for future analysis. Given its reputation and competence, the Agency should contribute to the entire spectrum of nuclear power issues, as it did so successfully with some aspects of the problem. The possibility of undoing the close link between nuclear power and proliferation was one example: Israel felt that proliferation risks could be limited appreciably by employing nuclear power alone without any nuclear fuel cycle infrastructure or fuel production and reprocessing activities. Also, a well designed research and development programme for more efficient and safer nuclear power should aim at increased proliferation resistance. There were at least two promising approaches: the use of thorium-fuelled light-water reactors and of high-temperature gas-cooled reactors. The development of models combining enhanced safety, proliferation resistance and efficiency could be essential for the future of nuclear power. The Agency could promote such research and development activities and complement the tools for assessing safety and efficiency with tools for analysing the efficiency of a given design from the safeguards point of view.

3. He commended the excellent work done by the Department of Technical Co-operation. The medfly eradication project in the Middle East was an excellent example of regional co-operation which built confidence. Israel looked forward to its expansion to other parties in the region. Future projects could be envisaged in the fields of nuclear medicine, the efficient utilization of freshwater resources and food preservation. Israel felt that even sub-regional initiatives could be very beneficial. It looked forward to technical co-operation being developed in its immediate neighbourhood with Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, and was ready to provide concrete support for such initiatives.

4. Reverting to the two draft resolutions on the Middle East, he said they needed to be viewed in the proper context, namely the recent developments in the peace process, which might herald a more benign era in the Middle East. His Government had made clear its commitment to the peace process in the region and vigorous moves were under way to revitalize it in all aspects. Israel believed that there was no going back. Nevertheless, the road ahead was long and arduous. All parties would have to show determination, goodwill, patience and restraint, in order to create and maintain a climate of confidence conducive to

progress. Unfortunately, the desire for peace and security was not shared by all. There were still States in the region which were eschewing the peace process, which continued to deny Israel's right to exist, which refused to forswear war as a means of settling disputes and which attempted to impede the peace process by means of terror and violence, either directly or through proxies. That regrettable trend by some countries to try to bypass a dialogue among the concerned parties in the Middle East had been repeatedly demonstrated in the Agency's policy-making organs and, at its present session, the General Conference was being called upon to revisit under agenda item 25 the so-called "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat", first introduced by Iraq, whose own capabilities in the matter of weapons of mass destruction had been amply demonstrated.

5. There had been many developments with respect to proliferation in recent years: the sombre experience of UNSCOM and the Action Team in Iraq, and other dangerous proliferation initiatives in the Middle East and other regions. Israel was not involved in any of them. On the contrary, it had never threatened any of its neighbours, not had it acted in violation of any of its international commitments. That was where the irony lay; instead of taking note of the peace process and of Israel's behaviour, there was an attempt to ostracize it. Israel remained committed to making the Middle East - in due course and in the proper context - a zone free both of weapons of mass destruction and of missiles.

6. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region should emanate from a regional initiative and be supported by all the States of the region. Such a zone could not be imposed. All the Parties to the NPT had reaffirmed their support for those principles in the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" in stating that "the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security". Item 25 of the General Conference's agenda clearly deviated from those agreed principles and objectives, and all the Member States which had approved the 1995 document should therefore be opposed to it. The provocations and attempts at political harassment contradicted the spirit of co-operation needed for a resolution on possible future developments in the Middle East to be adopted by consensus. A decision on a draft resolution under that agenda item was bound to create a situation where it would be impossible for Israel to join a consensus on a resolution concerning the application of safeguards in the Middle East. Once the tradition of consensus on the Middle East resolution was broken, it would be very difficult to restore it in future.

7. With a view to maintaining the long-established practice of adopting the Middle East resolution by consensus, he invited the General Conference to consider agenda item 24, "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East". Israel made no secret of its fundamental difficulties and reservations about the wording and the relevance of the resolution and had formally distanced itself from its modalities. It was, however, firmly committed to the establishment, in the proper context and at the proper time, of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and was thus willing to join a consensus once again if the text was not modified.

8. In no region could nuclear issues be considered outside a comprehensive and stable framework of peace and security. The vast experience accumulated with similar processes elsewhere showed that such a framework, along with careful and patient confidence-building, were essential conditions for disarmament and non-proliferation. Taken out of that context, formal commitments under the NPT or nuclear export controls, even when coupled with Agency safeguards, were not in themselves adequate guarantees of compliance with the Treaty. Nowhere was that more apparent than in the present day Middle East.

9. In that context, he drew attention to the experience of the Working Group for Arms Control and Regional Security that had been established in Madrid in 1991 as part of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process. In its four years of operation from 1992 to 1995, that Working Group, in which no less than 15 Middle East parties had taken part, had accomplished a great deal in negotiating specific confidence-building measures and setting the stage for serious arms control negotiations. That Group would undoubtedly have progressed much further with a co-operative security architecture for the Middle East, had not one of its regional parties blocked the required consensus for moving ahead. The areas of co-operative security which had been negotiated included the gradual progression from confidence-building to arms control for all categories of armaments - from light arms to weapons of mass destruction, with the imposition of various qualitative limitations on categories of arms and the control of expenditure for the procurement and use of those arms. Many initiatives concerning arms control and nuclear confidence-building measures had been on the agenda at that time.

10. Anyone who knew the history of the Tlatelolco Treaty or ABACC, or who had studied the "Asian way" of dealing with security would surely realize that a careful step-by-step and, just as importantly, informal confidence-building process was the proven recipe for transforming conflict-ridden regional relationships into more stable, enduring and mutually beneficial ones. The way to build security was to aim high, but start modestly and move ahead carefully, because confidence-building was a lengthy process. Time was needed to encourage others to co-operate, to win over hesitant bystanders, it being important not to intimidate, harass or ostracize those who needed time to assure themselves that their basic security interests would not be compromised. The two items on the agenda concerning the Middle East were hardly likely to foster progress towards a peaceful, safer and more stable Middle East, in which it would be feasible and desirable to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone, or indeed a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

11. Turning to amendment of Article VI of the Agency's Statute, an issue that had been under consideration by the General Conference and the Board of Governors for more than two decades, he commended the efforts of the last three Chairmen of the Board of Governors, who had devoted a large part of their time and energy to try and produce a text acceptable to all. Although the present text contained elements which left much to be desired, Israel could go along with it if it opened the way to consensus.

12. In conclusion, he said that, in order to preserve the traditions and spirit of the Agency, it was vital to resist all attempts to impair its professional competence and impartiality, and to shield it from the debilitating effects of politicization. Political initiatives and energies should

be directed at promoting regional co-operation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The Agency already had the requisite technical competence as well as an impressive track record in that area. Accordingly, he believed that that was the way to move ahead, using all the Agency's strengths to foster co-operation, stability and prosperity in the regions of the world which were lacking in them. Israel looked forward to working with the Director General and the Secretariat in all those areas and hoped that, as in previous years, reason and moderation would prevail, and that the resolutions adopted by the General Conference at its present session would strengthen the Agency in pursuit of its goal.

Mr. Adam (Belgium) took the Chair.

13. Mr. BEBRIS (Latvia), having welcomed the admission of Honduras and Angola to the Agency, associated himself with the statement made by the delegate of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

14. With all the new challenges facing the Agency, he noted in particular the introduction of the peer review process under the Convention on Nuclear Safety which served to evaluate the efforts undertaken in different countries to meet high safety standards. His own country recognized the need to improve its emergency preparedness system, and was also making arrangements for safe transition to the year 2000.

15. Reporting on changes that had been made to its institutional framework, which was still rather complex and comprised a number of ministries, he said Latvia was planning to establish a single central body in 2000 to regulate nuclear activities.

16. With regard to safeguards, Latvia was sure that the Agency would be playing an even more important role in the application of the NPT as a result of Additional Protocols. His country intended to complete the procedures for the signature and ratification of the Additional Protocol in 1999, but it would be needing extra time to prepare its initial report under the Protocol. Latvia was also intending to ratify the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

17. Latvia was working closely with its neighbours, Sweden and Norway, to develop a strategy for the prevention of illicit trafficking. The action plan being prepared would be submitted to other Baltic and Scandinavian countries at the end of the year. His delegation also wished to propose that the international nuclear community investigate more thoroughly the issue of contaminated scrap metal.

18. With regard to the new edition of the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material, he said that Latvia had already incorporated some of its provisions in its legislation but would be grateful if the competent expert group could complete the drafting of the related explanatory documents.

19. Latvia attached great importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities aimed at promoting sustainable development in the area of radiation and nuclear safety. It greatly welcomed the adoption of the Model Project concept and noted that the regional

approach for technical co-operation had also proved to be very useful. Latvia had already received valuable assistance from the Agency, and further aid would be welcome in the decade ahead in preparing for the decommissioning and dismantling of a research reactor.

20. In conclusion, Latvia urged the Agency to accelerate the development of comprehensive safety standards and guidelines for radioactive waste management. In particular, a system for the disposal of small amounts of long-lived radioactive waste was needed in small countries.

21. Mr. SOERIAATMADJA (Indonesia), having welcomed Angola and Honduras to the Agency, commended the Director General on his work in connection with the three main areas of the Agency's mandate, namely nuclear technology, safety and verification.

22. The Nuclear Energy Control Board (BAPETEN), an independent body established in 1998, had been fully operational since January 1999, and he was grateful to the Agency for the two missions it had conducted in Indonesia to assist BAPETEN with reviewing national legislation. He was also pleased to announce that Indonesia was signing the Protocol additional to its safeguards agreement, thus demonstrating its support for non-proliferation and total nuclear disarmament.

23. With regard to Article VI of the Statute, he commended the tireless efforts made to resolve that complex problem, and hoped that it would be finally settled at the present session. As for the technical co-operation programme, his delegation agreed that it should be demand-driven, results-based, and closely integrated into national development strategies.

24. Indonesia considered nuclear power as a possible alternative to oil and gas for the production of electricity in the medium and long term. Systematic planning was therefore required in all the areas concerned. A democratic decision-making process would also be introduced and public information programmes continued. In that connection, his delegation supported the Agency's initiative to focus on small- and medium-sized reactors that provided a technically reliable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution for the production of electricity and also fresh water and salt. That initiative was consistent with new legislation in Indonesia granting greater autonomy to regional authorities.

25. He noted with satisfaction the Agency's intention to redouble its efforts to apply nuclear technology to increase food production, fight disease, manage water resources and protect the environment, which were all problems faced by his country. With regard to staple foodstuffs, his Government had been able, through the National Nuclear Energy Agency (BATAN), to distribute high-yield mutant varieties of rice, soya and mung beans to farmers in ten provinces. As a result of technical assistance from the Agency, Indonesia had also introduced feed supplementation techniques to farmers, enabling meat and milk production to be increased. Furthermore, Indonesia was making increasing use of nuclear techniques to improve animal reproduction and health with a view to achieving self-sufficiency in milk and meat production. All those activities were carried out in close collaboration with regional authorities and local universities.

26. Turning to human health, he said that because of the economic and financial crisis that Indonesia was facing, several hospitals were having difficulties in providing satisfactory

diagnostic services, and the State was increasing its efforts to provide radiodiagnostic equipment, radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals. With regard to water resources management, the Indonesian Government was very interested in the Agency's isotope hydrology programme and the various applications of that technology.

27. He thanked the Agency for the special mission to Jogjakarta in August 1999, when Indonesia had launched a programme to incorporate nuclear technology in the regional development strategy, and also expressed Indonesia's satisfaction with the RCA, under which it had benefited from a wide spectrum of programmes. The latter, coupled with the bilateral technical co-operation activities organized by the Agency, had contributed significantly to the development of human resources and nuclear science and technology and its various applications. Indonesia would therefore continue to contribute actively to the RCA with a view to promoting technical co-operation among developing countries.

28. Mr. JOSEPH (Australia), having welcomed Angola and Honduras to the Agency, noted that the 1999 session of the General Conference was taking place in a less tense atmosphere than the previous year, when nuclear testing had been on the agenda. Australia hoped that the two States concerned would now honour the undertakings they had made earlier regarding the CTBT. That Treaty was to be reviewed the following week at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT.

29. The next treaty on arms reduction and, ultimately, nuclear disarmament was the cut-off treaty. Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament had made hardly any progress in that area. None the less, the conclusion of such a treaty remained a vital means of further reducing the risk of proliferation and an essential step towards nuclear disarmament. Australia hoped that the intersessional consultations that it was conducting in its capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament would lead to the early start of negotiations in 2000. In the meantime, it appreciated the Agency Secretariat's work in preparing information and advice on what was needed to verify compliance with a cut-off treaty. In Australia's view, the Agency was best placed to carry out such verification.

30. Like others, Australia was concerned that for nearly a year the Agency had been unable to carry out the inspections called for under Security Council resolution 687. It was concerned that Iraq might take advantage of that interruption to reactivate its nuclear-weapons programme. It therefore welcomed the Agency's commitment to resume verification in Iraq as soon as circumstances permitted.

31. In the DPRK, the Agency's responsibility was two-fold, stemming, on the one hand, from the safeguards agreement that was still in force and, on the other hand, from the role assigned to it by the Security Council pursuant to the Agreed Framework concluded between the DPRK and the United States. The Agency had done what it could under difficult circumstances to monitor the freeze of the DPRK's nuclear activities required by the Agreed Framework. However, for the Agency to be able to discharge its full safeguards responsibilities under the Agreed Framework, more co-operation was needed from the DPRK authorities. The Agency had still been denied the access that would allow it to measure the plutonium content of the spent fuel rods from the Nyongbyon reactor. For that and other

reasons the Secretariat was still not in a position to verify the DPRK's initial declaration and that country was still failing to comply with its safeguards agreement. The DPRK had to be induced to preserve all information needed by the Agency to be able to verify the accuracy and completeness of that declaration. Australia welcomed the apparent improvement in relations between the DPRK and the United States and hoped that it would lead to an improvement in co-operation with the Agency. In the meantime, the General Conference should require the Agency to continue its monitoring role, which remained vital.

32. In the case of both the DPRK and Iraq, the Agency should endeavour to establish a normal relationship on the basis of the existing safeguards agreements with those countries, but also through the conclusion of Additional Protocols. Unfortunately, the strengthened safeguards system, embodied in the Model Additional Protocol, was running behind schedule and, while Indonesia was to be congratulated on signing an Additional Protocol that very day, there appeared to be little prospect of reaching the objective of having Additional Protocols in force by mid-2000 with all States that had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements. Australia urged the Agency to step up its activities to correct those deficiencies and believed that the international community should declare the Model Additional Protocol as constituting the Agency's safeguards system prescribed by the NPT, so that all States Party to the Treaty would be obliged to conclude and implement Additional Protocols without delay.

33. The Board of Governors and the Secretariat had already spent an enormous amount of time trying to reconcile the conflicting demands of a zero-growth budget and the Agency's increased responsibilities. Australia had no magic solution to offer and could merely note with relief that it had been possible to reach a compromise on Agency funding for another year. At the following session of the General Conference, the safeguards component of Regular Budget contributions would have to be reviewed or renegotiated pursuant to resolution GC(39)/RES/11 adopted in 1995. Australia intended to participate actively in that review, since it believed that the whole international community benefited from the verification of nuclear non-proliferation, and the current arrangement - which was inelegant, too selective, and inequitable - was far too complicated.

34. The technical co-operation programme, valuable as it was, also placed increasing demands on Member States. Australia, recognizing the programme's importance, intended to increase its voluntary contribution to 1.5 million Australian dollars in 1999. It would continue to provide in-kind technical support to the Agency and to neighbouring countries in various areas of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and it was particularly interested in the RCA.

35. Among other budgetary issues facing the Agency, none had greater immediacy than the funding of the Agency's participation in the nuclear arms control verification arrangements. The Director General was to be commended for having raised the matter at the 1998 session of the General Conference, and then for having developed options for consideration by the Board of Governors. The political reality showed, or confirmed, that, despite the setbacks in South Asia in 1998 and the continuing concern about Iraq and the situation in the Korean Peninsula, the world had made extraordinary progress in bringing the nuclear genie under control. However, the function of verifying achievements continued to be an integral part of

the achievements themselves. That verification entailed real costs. The question was how to provide the Agency with the necessary resources to enable it to discharge its responsibilities and exploit new opportunities. The principal challenge that lay ahead would be coping with all those demands in the face of the zero-real-growth policy to which Member States were committed.

36. The new agreement reached by the Board of Governors on the monitoring of accumulations and transfers of neptunium and americium, which were now regarded as being of proliferation concern, was an important development. Australia, which had played a major role in those negotiations, welcomed the final result. It was content with the nature of the arrangements which had been agreed, but stressed the need for vigilance in case the quantities involved began to reach levels calling for more stringent measures such as applied to plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

37. Nuclear safety was another major Agency responsibility. It had done an excellent job in that area and Australia paid particular tribute to the Deputy Director General for Nuclear Safety, Mr. Domaratzki. Australia was particularly impressed with the way in which he had focused the Agency's Y2K activities on nuclear installation safety. Australia was happy to be one of the countries that had provided extrabudgetary resources to finance those activities.

38. The Convention on Nuclear Safety only covered power reactors, whereas research reactors, which were more numerous, were not subject to any comparable international regulation or peer review. It was true that research reactors were smaller than power plants, but transparency of operation and vigilance on safety were still essential. It was therefore time to consider whether some elements of the review mechanism under the Convention on Nuclear Safety should not be extended to research reactors.

39. There had been talk the previous year about the possibility of establishing a long-term repository for nuclear waste, spent fuel and surplus radioactive material in Australia under a proposal from a private company, Pangea Resources. The General Conference would seem to be the appropriate forum to reiterate the Australian Government's clear and unequivocal position, namely that its policy of prohibiting the import and disposal of radioactive waste from other countries was absolute and irrevocable.

40. Mr. KENIK (Belarus), after welcoming Honduras and Angola to membership of the Agency, recalled that since its independence Belarus had espoused the principles of nuclear non-proliferation. It had ratified the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, and concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency. It had been one of the first States to sign the CTBT and all strategic nuclear weapons had been withdrawn from its territory.

41. Belarus was very appreciative of the Agency's efforts to facilitate the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and urged all States with military programmes to curtail them and to submit all their nuclear installations and materials to Agency safeguards.

42. As a resolute supporter of non-proliferation, Belarus welcomed the Agency's activities in regard to the safety of radiation sources and the security of radioactive materials as well as

the measures taken to combat illicit trafficking in them. In accordance with its safeguards agreement, it was making every effort to exercise effective control over all the nuclear materials on its territory and was preparing to sign an Additional Protocol. Convinced of the need to further strengthen the safeguards system, Belarus was actively implementing the measures provided for in Part 1 of Programme 93+2 and was ensuring efficient operation of its national system of accounting for and control of nuclear material, which had been established with Agency help.

43. With the active support of the Agency and with the help of certain donor countries, including Japan, to which his country was particularly grateful and with which it looked forward to further fruitful collaboration, Belarus was planning to set up a regional training centre for accountancy, control and physical protection of nuclear material. It had already organized two international courses enabling specialists from ex-Soviet Union countries and Bulgaria, Poland and Romania to learn about the international safeguards system and the methods and practices applied to control nuclear materials. Recognizing that the illicit use and trafficking in nuclear materials was a global problem, Belarus advocated increasing the resources allocated in the Regular Budget to the programme on systems of accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear materials.

44. With a view to increasing the fruitful international co-operation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety, Belarus had acceded in January 1999 to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and had taken part in the work of the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to that Convention, which had shown that close co-operation was essential for maximum safety. At the same time, Belarus specialists were looking into the question of Belarus' possible accession to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

45. Belarus appreciated the Agency's consistent efforts to strengthen the safety of all reactors, including RBMK reactors. Believing that States were responsible for the safe operation of their nuclear power plants, Belarus, which had suffered terribly from the effects of the Chernobyl accident, acknowledged by the UN as the greatest technological disaster of the twentieth century, had postponed taking a decision on the construction of a nuclear power plant. Bitter experience had taught Belarus to attach particular importance to radiation and nuclear safety and it accordingly advocated that the Agency's activities to enhance safety by means of legal and verification mechanisms should continue to have high priority in the twenty-first century.

46. Collaboration between Belarus and the Agency under the technical assistance programme - the Agency's most dynamic programme - was producing satisfactory results and he welcomed the flexible approach taken by the Secretariat in heeding the interests of States when preparing that programme. The projects implemented in Belarus in 1999 concerned with rehabilitating land contaminated as a result of the Chernobyl accident were helping to promote scientific, technical and industrial development in those regions, particularly in the fields of radiation metrology, medicine, food and agriculture. One example was the project on rapeseed cultivation for the production of lubricants. Belarus planned to initiate another project with Agency assistance on the production of edible rapeseed oil.

47. Belarus was actively participating in regional co-operation by organizing training courses and fellowships and offering the services of its experts. He urged the Agency to continue to take advantage of Belarus' accumulated experience in the field of nuclear technology. Thus, several projects on the production of pharmaceuticals and new materials, developed in collaboration with the Agency, should be included in the technical co-operation programme for 2001-2002.

48. Belarus had made a commitment to pay back its arrears under a payment plan agreed with the Agency which it would do its utmost to observe. In spite of the difficult economic situation, aggravated by the need to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and natural disasters, it had made a contribution of US \$1 073 000 to the Regular Budget for 1999 and had also paid its assessed programme costs for 1998 and its voluntary contribution for 1999.

49. Finally, stressing that Belarus was doing everything possible to extend collaboration with the Agency and fully supported its activities in the fields of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, safety and non-proliferation, he appealed to Member States to support his country's candidature for a seat on the Board of Governors. In conclusion, he said his Government recommended approving the Annual Report for 1998 and the Agency's budget for 2000.

Mr. Ki-Moon Ban (Republic of Korea) took the Chair.

50. Mr. AL-JANABI (Iraq) said that over the previous eight years, Iraq had fulfilled its obligations under paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of Security Council resolution 687, and had co-operated with the Agency's Action Team. In the reports to the Security Council in October 1997, April 1998 and May 1999, the Director General had emphasized the coherent picture obtained of Iraq's former programme. Those reports indicated that the Agency was devoting the majority of its resources to the on-going monitoring and verification plan and that there were no significant inconsistencies between that picture and the information contained in the full, final and complete declaration issued by Iraq on 7 September 1996.

51. In his report of April 1999, the Director General stated that the evaluation of the results of the analyses of environmental samples taken during the inspection of presidential sites between 26 March and 3 April 1998 had shown no indication of the presence of proscribed materials, or the conduct of proscribed activities at any of the sites visited. That statement confirmed the fact that the allegations put forward by certain countries were unfounded, reinforced Iraq's credibility and corroborated the explanation it had given of the motives behind the allegations in question. It was important to recall all the publicity surrounding the presidential sites in view of the similar campaign currently being orchestrated by the same parties to spread false allegations that Iraq had carried out prohibited activities. The Agency's latest reports indicated that only a few outstanding questions remained and that they did not affect at all the coherent picture that the Agency had formed of Iraq's former nuclear programme.

52. It was clear from the foregoing that Iraq had discharged its obligations under resolution 687. It was therefore regrettable that the Security Council had not done the same

and lifted the sanctions imposed on Iraq because two permanent members of the Security Council had abused their influence to prevent the Council from concluding that Iraq had implemented all its obligations under resolution 687. Those two countries, the United States and the United Kingdom, had used UNSCOM to serve their own hostile policy towards Iraq and maintain the embargo. The aggression they had perpetrated from 16 to 20 December 1998 had highlighted their vile objectives and the infamous role that UNSCOM had played in espionage against Iraq, the provocation of false crises and the preparation of that aggression. The United States and the United Kingdom were continuing their aggression against Iraq, bombing civilian targets daily in the two air exclusion zones illegally established in the north and south of Iraq, causing casualties among women and children as well as material damage, and blatantly violating international law which they claimed to uphold. Iraq, whose Mesopotamian civilization had given humanity its first codes and laws, continued to suffer brutal aggression from the power-crazed United States and United Kingdom. The international community should condemn such aggression. Those who were demanding that Iraq conform to the Security Council resolutions should demand that the United States and United Kingdom observe the same resolutions, cease the aggression against Iraq and lift the embargo on it. That embargo, which had been in force for more than nine years was a crime of genocide against the Iraqi people, with the number of women, children and elderly people who had died as a result far exceeding the death toll at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

53. Iraq expected the Agency to adhere strictly to its professional and scientific approach and, since the Agency had concluded that Iraq had discharged its obligations under paragraphs 11, 12, and 13 of resolution 687, that it should resume relations with Iraq, apply safeguards there and not bow to the pressures exerted by States known for their hostility towards Iraq. It also requested the General Conference to consider seriously the withdrawal from the agenda of the item relating to Iraq.

54. The Agency had seven technical co-operation projects with Iraq in its programme for 1999-2000, three of them being regional ones. Those humanitarian-type projects were aimed at resolving numerous vitally urgent problems in Iraq. Through a letter dated July 1999, the Agency had informed the Iraqi authorities that the Sanctions Committee established by Security Council resolution 661 linked the implementation of those projects to the resumption of activities by Agency officials in Iraq. He wished to stress that Iraq had not expelled the Agency officials, and that the officials responsible for the technical co-operation programme, some of whom were already in Iraq, were most welcome there. He also maintained that the linkage of such issues was tantamount to holding humanitarian considerations hostage to political issues, which not only contravened the relevant Security Council resolutions, but also gave a false idea of the Iraqi position. Iraq had not requested the departure of the inspectors. They had left the country at the behest of the Chairman of UNSCOM, in advance of the perfidious aggression of 16 December 1998. The technical co-operation projects with Iraq had been approved by the Technical Assistance and Co-operation Committee, the Board of Governors and the Agency's Action Team, since they were consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The projects related to the early detection of cancer, the diagnosis of thyroid disorders among new-borns, and the suppression of rinderpest, a disease that had killed large numbers of cattle in Iraq and neighbouring countries.

55. The massive destruction of Iraqi nuclear facilities during the attack on Iraq by 30 States in 1991 had had grave consequences and had caused widespread contamination of the environment. The Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission had first drawn attention to the situation in 1991, and had held repeated consultations on the subject with the Agency's Action Team, requesting an assessment of the radioactive contamination, the harmful human effects of which were now becoming apparent. Iraq had already taken strong measures to combat the dangers of such contamination, and had requested technical assistance from the Agency to restore to service the radioactive waste processing facility at the Tuwaitha site destroyed in the 1991 attack. However, no tangible moves had been made by the Agency to help Iraq eliminate the effects of the radioactive contamination. Iraq was therefore continuing to rectify the situation by its own means but was being hampered in that task by the total embargo.

56. At the forty-second session of the General Conference, Iraq had drawn attention to the damage resulting from the use by the United States and United Kingdom in 1991 of 300 tonnes of depleted uranium against Iraqi forces, and to the radiological effects caused by the destruction of nuclear facilities, and had asked the international community for urgent assistance. On 23 February 1999, the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission had again urged the Agency to take appropriate measures and appealed to Member States to make a contribution equal to that made in response to other radiological accidents in the world. The effects on man and the environment were ongoing and cumulative, whilst the risks they presented did not stop at borders and affected the neighbouring countries of Iraq.

57. Iraq had constantly urged the establishment in the Middle East of a denuclearized zone free from weapons of mass destruction and it stressed that Israel's nuclear programme was a cause of deep concern among States of the region, because it was not subject to international control, a concern made all the greater by Israel's refusal to accede to relevant international treaties and accept the associated safeguards. Iraq wondered why the States of the region were not treated on an equal footing, why demilitarization only applied to certain countries, and why Israel's maintenance of an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, was accepted. The international community should shoulder its responsibilities and endeavour to make the Middle East a region free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It should also induce Israel to sign the NPT, abandon definitively the nuclear option, and accept full-scope Agency safeguards.

58. The negotiations in the Board of Governors and the General Conference on the amendment of Article VI of the Statute had been going on for more than two decades, without any solution acceptable to all parties being found. The United States had supported Israel's quest for membership of the Board of Governors as a representative of the MESA region, even though Israel possessed a formidable nuclear arsenal and refused to accede to the NPT and submit to international verification. Iraq rejected the link between the issue of Board expansion and the composition of regional groups. The composition of regional groups should be approved unanimously by the States concerned. A State could only join a group if all the members of the group approved. Finally, it would be necessary to ensure equitable distribution of seats between the different regions, once the issues of amendment of Article VI and expansion of the Board had been settled.

59. Mr. ALLOTEY (Ghana) said it was imperative for all members of the international community to support the Agency's efforts to promote - openly and impartially - the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, and in that regard he welcomed the admission of Angola and Honduras to the Agency.

60. On the threshold of the new millennium, now that the Agency had reached full maturity, the cold war had ceased and international co-operation was burgeoning, it was disturbing to find that world peace and security appeared as elusive as ever. The Agency, as the leading specialized institution in the nuclear energy field, needed to liaise more closely with other competent institutions to ensure that technological know-how was not used to destroy mankind, and for that it would require the unswerving support of all States. It was necessary to employ collective diplomacy and to recognize that, as all States were deemed equal and had equally valid interests and concerns, they all had to strive together to achieve the objectives of the NPT and complete nuclear disarmament. The Agency should work towards both the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

61. Considering the potential contribution that the peaceful application of nuclear energy could make to increasing the resources necessary for the survival of a rapidly expanding world population, he urged the Agency to accelerate the implementation of the resolutions concerning the technical and economic evaluation of the production of potable water by seawater desalination.

62. In co-operation with the Agency, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission was promoting research on the application of nuclear techniques and biotechnology to augment agricultural productivity and food security, enhance human health, develop industry, protect the environment and assure a high level of nuclear safety, particularly in hospitals and relevant industries. The Commission had moreover established the National Centre for Mathematical Sciences which provided opportunities for research and theoretical and practical training for scientists in Ghana and the whole of Africa with the support of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, which he commended on the remarkable role it played in that field. Par ailleurs, the National Radioactive Waste Management Centre had participated during the year in activities organized through AFRA.

63. He informed the General Conference that, for the first time in Africa, spent radium sources had been conditioned by a team of South African experts who had come to Ghana under an AFRA project. Furthermore, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission had organized a regional workshop on greenhouse gas effects in 1998.

64. Ghana deeply appreciated the excellent relations existing between the Agency and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission and especially the valuable support lent by the Agency to development projects. With continued assistance of that kind, the Commission would be able to contribute even more substantially to enhancing the health of the people.

65. Mr. PUCCIO HUIDOBRO (Chile), having welcomed Angola and Honduras as new members of the Agency, said that with the debate going on in some developed countries

concerning nuclear technology which was arousing more and more fears and prejudices in the public mind, it was up to the Agency to confront the challenge vigorously, concentrating on the two key concepts of safety and development. In fact, the future of nuclear technology depended absolutely on nuclear, radiation and waste safety. Chile would continue to co-operate in those fields inter alia by making the services of its experts available, and he exhorted countries to collaborate transparently on the systematic development of the necessary infrastructures and safety standards, particularly with respect to the transport of radioactive materials, which was a matter of great importance to Chile.

66. As regarded development, which was now synonymous with peace, it was up to the rich countries to discharge their responsibilities by working for a fairer and more stable world. The Agency was an appropriate institution to pursue that objective and Chile was gratified at the recent measures it had taken to strengthen its technical co-operation activities. TC, being the instrument for development and hence a cornerstone of peace, should become more and more the driving force of the Agency. The partners in TC, i.e. the donors, the recipients and the Agency, had to ensure that TC projects were adapted to national programmes so as to have a real impact on the socio-economic development of countries, as exemplified by the ARCAL programme in Latin America. The peaceful use of nuclear energy presupposed the maintenance of a proper balance between effective and efficient safeguards - security - and creative and expanding TC activities - development.

67. In conclusion, he deplored the fact that the proposed amendment of Article VI, aimed at expansion and democratization of the Board of Governors, had been for so long the subject of controversy and conflict within the Agency between regions having similar interests. Chile was trying to foster an agreement through consensus within GRULAC, but that would only be possible if the result benefited all parties, who would accordingly need to be fully consulted in the matter.

68. Mr. KASTCHIEV (Bulgaria) associated himself with the statement made by the delegate of Finland on behalf of the European Union. On the subject of non-proliferation, he declared his conviction that universal accession to the NPT and the implementation of all its provisions would contribute greatly to international security and to peaceful co-operation between Member States, and he was looking to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference to confirm the viability of the Treaty.

69. On 10 September 1999 Bulgaria had ratified the CTBT, whose entry into force would strengthen non-proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament, and he called on all countries to follow suit as soon as possible. He hoped moreover that the Conference on Disarmament would commence without delay negotiations towards a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military purposes. Bulgaria strongly supported the principle of strengthening safeguards and continued to support Programme 93+2.

70. Turning to illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources, he said Bulgaria recognized the primary importance of national countermeasures but welcomed the growing international co-operation between Member States and the increased efforts being

made by the Agency in that area. He also noted in that connection the improvement in the Agency's illicit trafficking database.

71. Stressing the importance of national export control measures, he said that, as a member of the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Bulgaria shared the view that the right enshrined in Article IV of the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set forth in Articles I and II of the Treaty.

72. Whilst welcoming the conclusion that the Agency had not detected any indication of diversion of nuclear material in 1998, he deplored the fact that the DPRK was still not complying with its safeguards agreement and that the Agency had still not been able to verify the correctness of that country's initial declaration.

73. On the subject of nuclear safety, the Bulgarian delegation commended the work performed under the Agency's extrabudgetary programme on WWER and RBMK reactors. Bulgaria had submitted its national report on the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and had taken an active part in the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention. It also attached great importance to the recommendations of the International Conference on the Strengthening of Nuclear Safety in Eastern Europe.

74. Bulgaria wished to thank the Agency for the assistance lent it on various TC projects and also to acknowledge the assistance provided to Member States to help deal with the Y2K problem.

75. With regard to the budget for 2000, he considered the programmes to be well balanced. Despite its financial difficulties, Bulgaria had paid the whole of its dues to the Regular Budget and the TCF in 1998 along with all its assessed programme costs. Its voluntary contribution to the TCF for 2000 would be equal to the recommended amount.

76. Nuclear power played an important role in meeting Bulgaria's electricity needs, its share of total generation being 41.5%. The safety of unit 1 of Kozloduy nuclear power plant had been continuously increased over its 25 years' service. A programme involving 86 activities had been undertaken in 1998 to strengthen the safety of units 1-4. The implementation of the upgrading programme on units 5 and 6, equipped with WWER-1000 reactors, had also commenced in 1998 with the participation of the European Consortium and Westinghouse.

77. He outlined legislative reforms planned in Bulgaria, the principal objective of which was to set up a strong, independent and competent regulatory body and to bring nuclear legislation into line with international conventions in preparation for Bulgaria's admission to the European Union. Bulgaria had also initiated the ratification procedure for the Protocol additional to its safeguards agreement and for the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

78. Recalling the fruitful co-operation between Bulgaria and the Agency in 1998, he stressed in particular the assistance provided by the Agency to improve the safety of nuclear

facilities, to enhance the capability of the authority responsible for nuclear safety and to train Bulgarian specialists abroad. Agency financial support had also enabled Bulgarian scientists to participate in various international meetings. For its part, Bulgaria had hosted Agency meetings and workshops and put its training facilities at the disposal of specialists from developing countries. Bulgarian research institutes and laboratories had also participated in the Agency's research programme and contributed to the implementation of co-ordinated research projects. Bulgaria was also participating actively in the International Nuclear Information System, the Incident Reporting System and the Power Reactor Information System.

79. Ms. MOSELY (New Zealand) regretted having to record, as at the previous General Conference, that the year gone by had not been particularly auspicious for countries which, like New Zealand, attached the utmost importance to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

80. The disturbing conclusion reached at the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament that non-proliferation and disarmament treaties could become hollow instruments, unless concerted action was taken promptly, was not unrealistic: universality was far from being achieved for many treaties and the nuclear non-proliferation norm had been infringed. Negotiations on a fissile material treaty had yet to begin in earnest, the Conference on Disarmament had yet to establish a subsidiary body to address nuclear disarmament and the CTBT had not entered into force. The balance sheet was not good therefore but New Zealand did not share the pessimistic view that all was lost.

81. Because of its concern that efforts towards nuclear disarmament and arms control were faltering, New Zealand along with Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden had launched the new agenda initiative based on the conviction that the continuing threat represented by the prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons had to be confronted forthwith. The new agenda proposed a practical and realistic way forward, and her delegation was pleased to see that that initiative had been favourably received.

82. Two major international events would provide an opportunity to demonstrate that governments were serious about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, namely the Conference on Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the CTBT, which would take place in Vienna the following week, and the NPT Review Conference due to be held in New York in 2000. As regarded the CTBT Conference, she recalled that it was taking place because the Treaty had to be ratified by 44 States to enter into force, and that essential step along the road to the total elimination of nuclear weapons had not yet been taken. The universal ratification of the CTBT and its prompt entry into force were absolute imperatives.

83. New Zealand regarded the NPT as the cornerstone of international peace and security and believed that the first Review Conference to take place since the Treaty had been extended indefinitely would be facing formidable challenges. The NPT review process was still evolving. At the 2000 Review Conference, States would have to shoulder their responsibilities and adopt the measures required to implement the Treaty fully in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament, at an early date.

84. The Agency was one of the pillars of the international security architecture, and New Zealand attached the highest importance to its vital contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament through its safeguards role of verifying that commitments made under the NPT were kept. Reiterating her disappointment that not all States had concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency and that only five Additional Protocols were in force, one of which being New Zealand's, she expressed the hope that strengthened safeguards would very soon become the norm.

85. New Zealand was most concerned that the Agency and the DPRK had fundamentally differing views regarding the application of the latter's safeguards agreement. That agreement was still in force and binding, so the DPRK was in breach of its legal obligations. New Zealand supported the Framework Agreement between the United States and the DPRK and was making a financial contribution to KEDO. The latter depended on the implementation of commitments towards the Agency, and the DPRK had to live up to those commitments, if that ambitious project were to come to fruition.

86. New Zealand was just as keen as any other State to have international security strengthened by arms control and reduction measures, backed up by a credible verification system. It particularly welcomed the progress made by the Agency, the United States and the Russian Federation in concluding arrangements for the verification of fissile material no longer required for military purposes.

87. It was clear, however, that that important initiative would have significant implications for the Agency's financial situation. For more than a decade the Agency had been operating under the constraint of a zero-real-growth budget, whilst at the same time being required to expand its activities, particularly in the safeguards field. Reliable and predictable funding was required for that purpose. New Zealand could not supply any magic solution to that problem, which was one that had to be faced up to squarely.

88. In subscribing fully to the need for a global nuclear safety culture, New Zealand, which itself possessed very little radioactive material, was concerned above all about the transport of such material by other parties, a concern which was shared by its Pacific island neighbours. New Zealand was thus deeply dismayed at the shipment of MOX fuel through its region en route from Europe to Japan. On the matter of transboundary movements of radioactive material, she made it clear that New Zealand's objective was prior notification and, ideally, prior informed consent procedures. However, at the present Conference her delegation was supporting a balanced and moderate draft resolution designed to build on an initiative taken the previous year to promote more transparency in the application of laws and regulations concerning the shipment of radioactive material. That draft resolution fell well short of New Zealand's ultimate objectives but it was a very practical and useful measure.

89. Turning to the matter of Article VI, she felt that a solution could now be in sight. From the outset, New Zealand had understood the sentiments of those who considered themselves to be underrepresented on the Board of Governors, and she hoped that the General Conference would demonstrate enough flexibility and mutual understanding to settle that question once and for all.

90. In conclusion, she commended the hard work, common sense and vision of the Director General and his staff and in particular the efforts made to increase the number of women in the Secretariat, especially in high-level posts.

Mr. Soeriaatmadja (Indonesia) took the Chair.

91. Mr. VALENTUKEVIČIUS (Lithuania), having welcomed the admission of Honduras and Angola to the Agency and thanked the Director General and the Deputy Director General for Nuclear Safety for their visit to Lithuania in June, endorsed the statement made by the delegate of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

92. Because of the crucial role played by nuclear power in its national economy, Lithuania accorded high priority to improving safety. The national regulatory authority had followed the western model in issuing Ignalina NPP with a five-year licence to operate unit 1. During 1999 nuclear legislation had been expanded by two acts elaborated with the aid of Agency experts, one covering radiation protection and the other radioactive waste management.

93. The new national energy strategy, which Parliament was currently debating, provided for unit 1 at Ignalina NPP to be shut down in 2005, with the unit 2 being due to start up in 2004. The cost of closure would be immense and Lithuania would require financial and technical assistance from the European Union and other organizations. A donor conference would take place shortly in Vilnius, and Lithuania hoped that the Agency would contribute to its success.

94. More than 80 per cent of the measures contained in the second safety improvement programme for Ignalina NPP had already been implemented and it was proposed to set up a third programme of that type and produce a new safety analysis report. In that connection, he noted with satisfaction that the nuclear community had acknowledged that second-generation RBMK reactors of the type installed at Ignalina could tolerate design-basis accidents without substantial damage to the environment.

95. Lithuania considered the exchange of views during discussions of national reports under the Convention on Nuclear Safety to have been most useful. The Convention could evidently serve as a means of assessing the level of nuclear safety in a particular country. In that connection, he noted that remarks made regarding the safety of Ignalina NPP had not taken into account either the substantial technical safety measures being implemented or the improvements in safety culture which had taken place. Thanks to support from the Agency and the United States Department of Energy, the Y2K problem should not directly affect safety-related systems at Ignalina NPP or other important systems in the energy sector.

96. International co-operation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety was especially important for small countries with modest resources. The problems of low- and medium-level radioactive waste, and the final disposal of spent nuclear fuel could best be solved by joint efforts, and the Agency could play a very important role in co-ordinating such efforts. That also applied to the development of safety standards for the transport of radioactive material, and Lithuania appreciated the Agency's efforts to create a uniform global regime for the transport of such material.

97. Recalling that Lithuania had acceded to the NPT in September 1991, he noted that the State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI) had set up a State system of accounting and control of all nuclear material subject to safeguards. As a staunch supporter of the NPT, Lithuania highly appreciated the Agency's contribution to the application of comprehensive safeguards and deplored the fact that some States were still opting to stay outside the NPT regime whilst others were violating safeguards agreements concluded with the Agency.

98. Turning to the physical protection of nuclear material and nuclear facilities, he commended the Agency's contribution in that field and expressed his country's gratitude for the IPPAS mission to Lithuania in June 1999 to verify that its system conformed with international standards.

99. On the subject of technical co-operation, he expressed appreciation for the assistance provided to Lithuania under the national project on the training of nuclear power plant personnel and regional projects concerned with the upgrading of radiotherapy facilities, the development of a legal framework for nuclear activities, and radioactive waste management. A marked increase in bilateral co-operation between Lithuania and other Member States was also taking place.

100. Mr. NSIMBI (Zimbabwe), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that Zimbabwe had also benefited from nuclear technology and was in the process of implementing four technical co-operation projects, including one on the use of isotopes for assessing and developing water resources, the aim of which was to formulate an effective groundwater management plan.

101. The Model Project on the production of biofertilizers to help increase agricultural production, involving six of the eight provinces in the country, was having a positive impact on smallholders. Following the success of the project, the Agency was supporting a regional project aimed at increasing the production of smallholders through the use of biofertilizers in sub-Saharan Africa as part of the technical co-operation programme for 1999-2000, and Zimbabwe was playing a key role in that project. The counterparts concerned were organizing a national demonstration programme on soya bean processing technology to increase the impact of the project and win increased Agency assistance.

102. Two other projects concerning Zimbabwe had also been approved as part of the 1999-2000 cycle, one relating to radioimmunoassay techniques for cancer diagnosis, and the other to control of the human papilloma virus associated with cervical cancer. Furthermore, his country was participating in a project to establish a radiation protection infrastructure and was planning to set up an independent national body responsible for that area. In March 1999, Zimbabwe had hosted the first co-ordination meeting for the regional project on the use of isotopes to control communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria, and the success of that project would greatly improve the welfare of the population.

103. With regard to Article VI of the Statute, Zimbabwe supported the proposal of the Group of 77 and China for expansion of the Board by eight seats, and urged the General Conference to reach consensus on the issue before the end of the present session.

104. Zimbabwe, which had become a member of AFRA in April 1998, had benefited from that agreement in terms of capacity building. Unfortunately, owing to financial constraints obtaining in other sectors, the four projects involving Zimbabwe had not yet started, but the Government had undertaken to make available the funds required for their implementation in 2000.

105. With regard to the Y2K problem, he noted that the competent authorities in Zimbabwe were taking corrective measures and establishing contingency plans in order to meet the deadline of 31 December 1999.

106. Finally, his Government, which recognized the need to meet its financial obligations in full and on time, was studying a proposal to guarantee payment of all its financial contributions to the Agency.

107. Mr. MALESKI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), having welcomed Angola and Honduras as new members, lauded the Agency's tireless efforts to encourage the use of nuclear technology to foster the sustainable economic and social development of its Member States. Moreover, the Agency was playing a crucial role in developing legal instruments essential for international security and stability. His delegation also commended the efforts made to improve all aspects of nuclear safety and to prevent illicit trafficking.

108. With regard to the measures taken to strengthen regional co-operation with a view to achieving a more integrated approach to safety and environmental issues, he expressed his country's appreciation to the Agency for the attention it was paying to the regional project on the Prespa lake, which his country was implementing with Albania and Greece.

109. Having enumerated projects being implemented in the fields of nuclear medicine, animal production, irrigation, and non-destructive testing, he said that the projects for the next cycle would be defined with Agency assistance. In that connection, he expressed appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered by the Department of Technical Co-operation in formulating national projects and establishing priorities. The Agency had also aided the Macedonian Government to elaborate safety standards in conformity with its recommendations, and to develop the associated infrastructure as well as legislation and monitoring systems.

110. Having thanked the Agency for its support, enabling Macedonian specialists to participate in various courses and seminars that it had organized, he highlighted joint efforts with the Agency to strengthen the national capacity for organizing training courses on radiation protection in industrial and medical radiography. His country was prepared, with assistance from the Department of Technical Co-operation, to host specialists from neighbouring countries. Finally, he announced that his country had pledged its share of the TCF target.

111. Mr. CHARRY SAMPER (Colombia) said that the Agency's mission was to increase the ability of Member States to make full use of nuclear technology to foster socio-economic development, taking account of the different levels of nuclear development,

the environmental hazards of that form of energy and the desire of peoples in all regions of the world for nuclear weapons to be subjected to control and progressively eliminated.

112. The Agency had an irreplaceable role to play in the application of verification measures aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and encouraging the dismantling of nuclear arsenals. Efficient co-ordination between the Agency and the United Nations system, and swift reaction to violations of safeguards agreements would serve to establish conditions ensuring that that prodigious source of energy was used for constructive and not destructive purposes.

113. Colombia noted with satisfaction the Agency's contribution to the strengthening of national capacities in the nuclear field thanks to national technical co-operation projects, ARCAL projects, study visits, expert missions, equipment and training. The new technical co-operation strategy had made it possible to pay closer attention to the needs of each country and focus on the end-user, which increased the efficiency of technical co-operation activities. It was important to intensify such co-operation with those that had the greatest need, i.e. the developing countries.

114. The ARCAL programme had been established 15 years earlier and, since that time, the participants had defined and implemented projects to meet their immediate needs. They had used the infrastructure established or improved as a result of those projects for specific applications, and were endeavouring to consolidate their achievements. If that co-operation were to remain fruitful, it would be necessary, as part of the ongoing evaluation process, to take constant account of the interests and priorities of Member States, as well as the benefits to be derived from Agency expertise.

115. One of Colombia's priorities in the nuclear area was to improve its radiation protection infrastructure, as it did not yet have an effective and independent regulatory or normative framework, or a complete radiation protection and nuclear safety system. An Agency mission had gone to Colombia to examine a plan of action to strengthen radiation protection. That plan, the implementation of which was a test of the ability of the Agency and the Colombian Government to undertake joint action, covered the following areas: legal framework, regulation, codes of practice, regulatory body, regulatory control, monitoring of occupational exposure, management of radioactive waste, and emergency response. That expert mission had also helped to develop a draft law on radiation protection and nuclear safety which the Agency was currently examining, and which he hoped could be adopted shortly.

116. In June, the regulatory and monitoring functions of the Research Institute for Geological Sciences, Mining and Chemistry (INGEOMINAS) had been transferred to the Ministry of Energy and Mines. Thus, a first step had been taken towards the establishment of a supervisory body for the peaceful use of nuclear energy that was independent of the promotional body, as recommended by the Agency.

117. INGEOMINAS, whose research and information role in the nuclear area had been strengthened, now had two main areas of activity: the characterization and processing of

radioactive minerals and materials, and the development of a national strategy for preventing and dealing with radioactive risks.

118. Colombia, whose constitution already forbade the dumping of toxic and radioactive waste, hoped that the Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste, which the General Conference had adopted in 1990, would make it possible to give effect to that constitutional provision. Furthermore, the draft law on radiation protection and nuclear safety provided for the adoption of the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials.

119. Noting the efforts undertaken to strengthen the safeguards system, and in particular, the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol by the Board of Governors, he said that Colombia, which had concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency in connection with the Tlatelolco Treaty, was currently considering completing the formalities required for the signing of a safeguards agreement in connection with the NPT and a Protocol additional to that agreement.

120. Finally, he hoped that the present session of the General Conference would succeed in adopting a balanced amendment of Article VI of the Statute, which would provide for better representation of the developing countries, particularly those from Latin America and the Caribbean, and thereby duly acknowledge the positive role played by that region in deciding in 1967 to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone and in so doing encouraging the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

121. Mr. SANON (Burkina Faso), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to membership of the Agency, said that the forty-third session of the General Conference was taking place in a special context with the dawn of a new millennium bringing many challenges.

122. Several initiatives had been taken in 1998 to improve the internal management of the Agency. A group of experts had reviewed the Agency's activities and had reaffirmed the relevance of its primary mission which was to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. The activities carried out on the African continent proved that nuclear technology and energy could contribute greatly to national development and he urged the Agency to intensify its efforts to initiate joint programmes with regional bodies and other United Nations organizations.

123. In 1998, the AFRA programme had concentrated in particular on regional harmonization and rationalization of legislation and regulations relating to radiation protection and radioactive waste. He appealed to donors and multilateral and bilateral bodies to support AFRA's activities through various projects in the areas of agriculture, human and animal health, water resources management, training, etc. He was gratified by the level of contributions to the technical co-operation programme in 1998.

124. Burkina Faso had demonstrated its commitment to the ideals of international peace and solidarity through its constant active involvement in the Agency's activities since becoming a member in September 1997. It had also joined AFRA and set up a liaison centre to

co-ordinate Agency activities in Burkina Faso. Discussions were under way with the Secretariat to start a co-operation programme which took the country's needs and specific conditions into consideration.

125. He thanked the Agency for the promptness with which it had organized a mission to Burkina Faso in June 1999, where it had been able to see the importance attached to Agency activities by the national authorities. Burkina Faso intended to honour all its commitments as a member of the Agency, including the payment of contributions and the conclusion of safeguards agreements.

126. The Agency should play a leading role in international co-operation on nuclear, radiation and waste safety. He hoped that a decision on Article VI would be taken at the present session of the General Conference in a spirit of consensus, equity and justice and said that his delegation would do its utmost to help achieve such a consensus.

127. Mr. ABDULAATI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), having extended a welcome to Honduras and Angola, said that his country attached great importance to technical co-operation in the scientific and nuclear fields in view of the big contribution it made to most spheres of economic and social development, with nuclear energy becoming indispensable to meet the growing needs of the developing countries. Small and medium power reactors would be vital in that regard because they were well adapted to consumption in the developing countries. Special attention should therefore be given to those types of reactor which could be used for seawater desalination. Nuclear techniques had a key role to play in groundwater exploration, and hydrology projects should be promoted, particularly in countries with severe water shortages. Support was needed for regional bodies, like the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, concerned with promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

128. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya endorsed the steps taken by the Agency to strengthen international co-operation in the fields of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transport and management of radioactive waste, and the combating of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. It also attached high importance to nuclear disarmament, as it was convinced that weapons of mass destruction posed a threat to international peace and security. That was why at international forums it had consistently advocated denuclearization of the Middle East, where the fact that one country - Israel - possessed nuclear weapons caused a serious security imbalance. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which was party to the Pelindaba Treaty, called for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and for Israel to submit its nuclear installations to international inspection in accordance with the NPT. There would be no peace in the Middle East as long as certain powers continued to support Israel.

129. Despite laudable efforts by the Agency to improve the representation of the developing countries, no tangible progress had been made and he urged that more nationals from the developing countries be appointed to senior Agency posts, especially as they now had the required competence in many areas. Noting that Africa remained the least well represented continent on the Board, he called for the Board of Governors to be enlarged in the light of the changes which had taken place in the world in recent years, in order to maintain confidence, strengthen the role of the Agency and secure equitable representation for the developing

countries so that their interests would be catered for both in the management of the Agency and in decision-taking on its future directions, programmes and activities.

130. Finally, stressing the importance of universality of the safeguards system, he called on the nuclear-weapon States to finalize a programme to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and terminate all nuclear weapon development programmes.

131. Mr. HLAING (Myanmar), after congratulating Honduras and Angola as new members, noted with satisfaction that the Agency was reviewing and redirecting its activities to better respond to the needs and interests of its Member States.

132. With nuclear safety assuming international dimension, the Agency's role was becoming more important than ever, and he commended its activities in that sphere, as well as in the spheres of radiation safety, non-proliferation and safeguards, and the promotion of nuclear energy and its applications, which was making an important contribution to sustainable development and prosperity in Member States.

133. Technical co-operation served to promote the use of environmentally friendly techniques, and the Agency had given Myanmar valuable assistance in terms of equipment, experts and training in the fields of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy. Myanmar was also making increasing use of radioisotopes in industry. As a member of the RCA, it appreciated the efforts by the Agency to promote co-operation through its regional agreements.

134. As it embarked on a programme of nuclear applications, Myanmar was aware that it needed an adequate radiation protection infrastructure. The Agency was providing assistance in that area too. Myanmar was participating in interregional Model Projects on radiation and waste safety. It was also preparing regulations on the use of radiation sources and nuclear materials and intended to establish a regulatory authority.

135. Long-term development needed to be examined on the threshold of a new millennium. Myanmar would certainly need to develop nuclear applications in industry and would also need nuclear power. It needed to start planning as a matter of urgency, learning from the experience of other countries and drawing on Agency assistance. His delegation hoped that the Agency would accord priority to the least developed countries in its technical assistance programme.

136. On the subject of nuclear weapons, he noted that his country was party to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which would help strengthen peace, security and stability in the region. Myanmar was convinced that the establishment of such zones was an effective way of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it would continue to participate actively in international efforts to secure the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

137. Mr. PULE (Zambia), having welcomed Angola and Honduras as new members, commended the Agency's efforts to strengthen its technical co-operation activities and broaden its vision; he particularly welcomed the training that it was providing on project design and implementation, which would help improve access to technical co-operation.

138. Zambia was deriving great benefit from the skills acquired under technical co-operation projects, including the use of gamma radiation to sterilize biological dressings. The development of certain cultivars had also been very successful and, thanks to Agency fellowships, Zambian researchers had received training in the use of radiation to improve crop yields. The various agricultural programmes concerned with both food and cash crops had significantly increased farmers' incomes. A project on industrial aerosol measurement would improve the working environment in the mining sector, which employed very large numbers of workers. The project would serve to create a database that would be useful for environmental protection and occupational health studies. Other projects on biofertilizers and animal feed supplements were helping smallholders to improve crop and livestock productivity. Furthermore, the Tropical Disease Research Centre had made considerable progress in the use of nuclear techniques against malaria.

139. Fruitful work had been carried out over the past ten years within the framework of AFRA, including the establishment of special teams for the auditing of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine procedures, the conditioning of radium sources and the detection of dam leakage. The AFRA project on the maintenance and repair of scientific equipment had enabled 20 Zambian technicians to receive training in the repair and maintenance of nuclear instrumentation on two courses organized in 1998. In the area of nuclear waste management, Zambia had hosted a pre-project mission on the conditioning of radium sources used in the mining industry.

140. Although Zambia was not currently handling nuclear materials, it was taking steps to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in radiation sources and ensure the security of radioactive materials. A seminar on those issues had been held in August 1999 in Lusaka, attended by 30 specialists in different fields (airline staff, fire-fighters, medical personnel, non-governmental organizations, etc.). In order to solve the problem of illicit trafficking in the long term, it would be essential for the Agency to assist Member States acquire the technical skills for detection activities.

141. His delegation wished to stress that the enlargement of the Board being sought through amendment of Article VI of the Statute should be effected in such a way as to ensure equitable geographical representation of the membership of the Agency. In conclusion, he commended the Agency's work to improve the social and economic conditions of the developing countries, curb the spread and threat of nuclear weapons, and halt the degradation of the environment. Zambia would be pledging its full share of the TCF target for the year 2000.

142. Mr. FEU ALVIM (Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) said that ABACC, which had been established by the Guadalajara Agreement between Brazil and Argentina in 1991 with the aim of eliminating any nuclear proliferation risks in the region, had been extremely successful. The increased solidarity between the countries of the region had spread in the economic, technical and cultural spheres to Uruguay and Paraguay with the establishment of MERCOSUR.

143. Brazil and Argentina, which had in the meantime taken a series of formal measures towards disarmament and non-proliferation, had announced at the previous session of the Board of Governors their intention to begin consultations with the Agency for the conclusion of a Protocol Additional to the Quadripartite Agreement, and ABACC was pleased to announce that it was ready to do likewise.

144. Since 1992, ABACC had been applying safeguards to Brazilian and Argentine facilities, and since 1994, within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement, it had been co-ordinating its activities with the Agency's safeguards operations with a view to avoiding duplication, while preserving the independence of each organization. Those efforts had borne fruit: during the past year ABACC had progressed in the common use and standardization of equipment, the co-ordination of announced and unannounced inspections, as well as the integration of training programmes for inspectors within the framework of technical co-operation between the two agencies. An agreement had also been reached with the IAEA on the use of common safeguards procedures for small enrichment plants which ABACC was already applying.

145. ABACC's fruitful co-operation and interaction with several organizations and countries, including the IAEA, the United States Department of Energy, EURATOM, the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique, the Technology Centre for Nuclear Control of the Korean Atomic Energy Research Institute, Japan, the United Kingdom and Chile, were enabling it to keep fully up to date and integrated in the international safeguards system

146. Finally, he pointed out that the integration of a regional and a State system for accounting and control of nuclear material with the Agency's international system would only be possible if the State system were credible. If the Agency were to introduce a quality assurance system, it could make more use of the regional system under the new safeguards regime incorporating the Additional Protocol.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.