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Plenary

Record of the Third Meeting

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President: Mr. TAKASU (Japan)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(47)/INF/14/Rev.2

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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
ARASIA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
G-8	Group of Eight
GDP	gross domestic product
HEU	high-enriched uranium
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Joint Protocol	Joint Protocol Relating to the Application of the Vienna Convention and the Paris Convention
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NNSTC	National Nuclear Science and Technology Centre
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
Nuclear Safety Convention	Convention on Nuclear Safety

Abbreviations used in this record: (continued)

OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SAGNA	Standing Advisory Group on Nuclear Applications
SAGNE	Standing Advisory Group on Nuclear Energy
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Co-operation
SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
TACC	Technical Assistance and Co-operation Committee
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

5. Arrangements for the Conference

(a) Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the agenda for the current session consist of all the items on the provisional agenda set forth in documents GC(47)/1 and Add.1 except item 2. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion and the order of items, the Committee had recommended also following the suggestions given in those documents.

2. The General Committee's recommendations were accepted.

(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session

3. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the Conference set Friday, 19 September 2003, as the closing date of the forty-seventh regular session and Monday, 20 September 2004, as the opening date of the forty-eighth regular session, which would be held in Vienna.

4. The General Committee's recommendation was accepted.

— Requests for the restoration of voting rights (GC(47)/INF/9 and 10)

5. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had decided to discuss the requests for the restoration of voting rights from Armenia and Kazakhstan at its next meeting.

6. The General Committee's decision was accepted.

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2002 (resumed) (GC(47)/2)

7. Mr. SHKOLNIK (Kazakhstan) said that in his country work on the regulation of nuclear activities focused on the control of radioactive materials, including control of the use and movement of ionizing radiation sources. With the support of the Agency, those controls were being strengthened, and measures were being taken to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials. The International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources held in Vienna in March 2003 had been an important event in that regard.

8. Kazakhstan welcomed the IAEA programme to strengthen the control of radioactive sources and would suggest that a system for the control of inter-State transfers of such sources be set up, along the lines of the system of control for transfers of nuclear materials. His country welcomed the approval by the Board of Governors of the new edition of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and planned to incorporate its provisions into national regulatory norms in the

near future. It also welcomed the initiative taken by the Agency, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to implement a programme designed to re-establish control of sources within the territory of the former USSR.

9. After gaining its independence, Kazakhstan had abandoned the military use of atomic energy, and now banned the production of nuclear explosive devices. With the support of donor countries, work was in progress to liquidate the infrastructure of weapons of mass destruction, and controls over all nuclear activities were being strengthened. In November 2003 his Government would be signing the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency.

10. The NPT regime, one of the key elements of international peace and stability, had been severely tested in 2003. He was sure that the active approach taken by the Director General with the support of Member States would succeed in strengthening the non-proliferation regime, and he looked forward to the 2005 NPT Review Conference as an important step in that direction.

11. Research into nuclear and radiation safety was continuing in Kazakhstan as a basis for developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy. In particular, studies were being conducted on the optimization of the nuclear fuel cycle, and it was planned to participate in work on innovative reactor technologies. Kazakhstan was also taking part in controlled fusion research under the ITER programme. Work had begun on the construction of a new accelerator to be used for nuclear applications as well as for educational purposes, and plans were being made to develop nuclear medicine.

12. In conclusion, he confirmed Kazakhstan's support for all Agency activities aimed at developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and improving safety.

13. Mr. BAHRAN (Yemen) emphasized the potential benefits for developing countries of participation in the General Conference, especially in terms of scientific and technological advances and peaceful uses of atomic energy for the pursuit of comprehensive development.

14. His country supported in particular the Agency's activities in the areas of: strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy; nuclear and radiation safety and security; waste safety; transport safety of radioactive materials; strengthening and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system; and measures against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and radioactive sources as well as measures promoting the safety of such sources.

15. He appreciated the Agency's support for the developmental activities of Member States, especially in the areas of public health, water, agriculture, industry and protection of human beings and the environment from radiation and other hazards.

16. Yemen supported strong action to eliminate the causes of political tension and wars and to promote understanding and cooperation among nations. It therefore supported nuclear disarmament within the framework of the NPT, elimination of the damaging effects of nuclear weapons on people and the environment and the equitable subjection of the nuclear installations of all States – without exception – to international supervision and the Agency's safeguards system. Accordingly, he urged the international community to ensure that Israel's nuclear installations were made subject to international law by requiring it to adhere to the NPT and to sign a safeguards agreement and an additional protocol.

17. Yemen's initiatives on radiation safety and safety of radioactive sources at the national, regional and international levels had culminated at the current Conference in its sponsorship of draft resolutions together with Australia, the European Union and the United States, in particular the draft resolution under the agenda item on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste management, the draft resolution under the agenda item on nuclear security and the draft resolution on the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

His country had also submitted a proposal which had been adopted at the fifteenth regular session of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency's General Conference, held recently in Tunis, calling for joint Arab action in the area of radiation safety and security of radioactive sources.

18. The reports of the Agency's peer review mission to Yemen in July 2003, organized at his country's request, indicated that Yemen had established its National Atomic Energy Commission in 1999 as an independent national regulatory body entrusted with specific responsibilities and functions in conformity with international standards and that the Commission had been able, in a short period of time, to develop an effective and successful inspection, registration and authorization regime incorporating appropriate safety requirements.

19. The Model Project on upgrading the radiation protection infrastructure had proved extremely successful in Yemen and in many other Member States. His country shared with other countries participating in ARASIA the view that the Model Project should not only be continued but strengthened and expanded. He noted in that connection that ARASIA had been playing a major role in solving the common problems of its participating States.

20. Mr. BUGAT (France) paid tribute to Mr. Sérgio Vieira de Mello and the other United Nations staff who had died in the service of the international community as a result of the recent terrorist attack in Baghdad.

21. Non-proliferation issues and commitments were now, more than ever, one of the major challenges facing the international community. While France recognized the inalienable right of States to benefit from nuclear energy development for peaceful purposes and from international cooperation in that area, as laid down in Article IV of the NPT, that right could only be exercised provided the safeguards measures foreseen by Article III of the Treaty were strictly observed so as to establish a climate of trust between all parties.

22. In the particular case of Iran, it was now up to that country to restore a climate of trust, openness, cooperation and total transparency. While the Iranian authorities had already taken some steps in that direction, they had still not provided satisfactory answers to questions raised by the Agency. They should therefore comply with the resolution¹ adopted by the Board of Governors the previous week and cooperate unreservedly with the Agency. In particular, Iran should unconditionally sign, ratify and implement an additional protocol based on the model adopted by the Board.

23. The situation in the DPRK was also a source of grave concern. The DPRK's refusal to meet the commitments it had accepted for the application of safeguards and its announced withdrawal from the NPT constituted a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation system. A peaceful solution needed to be based on multilateral dialogue, such as within the framework of the current six-party talks.

24. The NPT was and should remain the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that respect, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference had demonstrated the strength and value of the Treaty as well as the efficiency of enhanced reviews and preparatory committees. France hoped that the preparation for the 2005 Review Conference would continue in a balanced and progressive way leading to full implementation of all the Treaty's objectives.

25. France also looked forward to the convening of a diplomatic conference to ratify the amendment to the CPPNM which was currently being drafted.

¹ GOV/2003/69.

26. The Agency's activities made an important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and, moreover, greatly facilitated the dissemination of nuclear technologies to those countries that had a legitimate need to use and develop them for peaceful purposes.

27. France had always vigorously supported the Agency's technical cooperation programmes and, having paid its share of the TCF target in full, invited all Member States to do the same. France had also financed several footnote-a/ projects and continued to support the activities being carried out under the AFRA and ARCAL regional agreements. French specialists had contributed to expert missions in several countries, and France itself continued to welcome fellows. It also remained firmly committed to training, particularly in the area of radiation protection.

28. Nuclear technologies could make a major contribution to development in the areas of health, food and agriculture, access to water and energy, and environmental protection. France supported the international provision of Agency expertise in the area of sustainable development and wished to see further expansion of such activities.

29. The Nuclear Safety Convention had led to progress in a number of areas and those States that had nuclear installations but were not yet parties to the Convention should ratify it as soon as possible. With regard to the Joint Convention, France welcomed the success of the organizational meeting held in April 2003 and was actively preparing to participate in the first review meeting to be held in November 2003.

30. The International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material recently held in Vienna had highlighted the high level of safety and sophistication of transport-related activities. It had also confirmed the justification for international action and the need for continued cooperation and dialogue on ensuring that the highest possible level of safety was achieved, that the parties worked together effectively to improve safety still further, and that strengthened assurances of transport quality and safety were provided.

31. In the case of international transports, France strictly applied international regulations, and it had asked the Agency to carry out a TranSAS mission in 2004. Together with its partners, France had engaged in a dialogue over several years to ensure the greatest level of transparency possible and to provide concerned countries with the assurances they were seeking as well as other useful information. Such transport activities should of course always comply with basic security requirements and should not call into question the provisions of the Law of the Sea.

32. The Agency's system of strengthened and integrated safeguards provided essential instruments for more credible verification of the NPT and increased confidence within the international community. They should be implemented as widely and swiftly as possible in order that all States might reap the benefits. In that spirit, France had carried out a regional project involving 30 African countries the previous year, and it very much welcomed the recent signature of those instruments by several of them.

33. However, despite such progress, only 74 additional protocols had been concluded to date, of which 35 were currently in force. France therefore called on all States to fulfil their commitments to sign and implement an additional protocol as soon as possible, and pledged to continue its own diplomatic efforts aimed at universal implementation of that instrument.

34. In that context he noted that the law authorizing the ratification of France's additional protocol had been finally adopted on 10 April 2003 and that the internal procedures for its implementation were now being determined.

35. The events of 11 September 2001 had heightened awareness that nuclear or radioactive material could be used for criminal or terrorist purposes. The international community had taken action to

protect itself against that threat and, while relying on the existing high level of protection for nuclear activities, would further improve the situation where necessary.

36. Although responsibility for nuclear security rested primarily with States, the exercise of national responsibilities should receive effective support from international cooperation and information exchange. In conformity with its Statute, the Agency obviously had an important role to play in ensuring the security of nuclear material and installations. France had already provided financial and technical support for the anti-terrorism measures adopted by the Board of Governors in 2002.

37. With regard to the security of radioactive sources, the conference held in Vienna in March 2003 had laid the foundations for the Agency to widen its activities in that area. During the G-8 summit held in Evian in June, France had expressed its commitment to improve the security of radioactive sources and had launched an action plan aimed at supporting Agency activities and promoting the recently adopted Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. France would continue to make an active contribution to that initiative, particularly as it was due to host the fourth international conference on the safety and security of radioactive sources in 2005.

38. Turning to the prospects for nuclear power, he said that concerns over security of energy supply and greenhouse gas emissions had made it an increasingly attractive option. It had also been recognized as a competitive source of energy, for example, in Finland. In order to ensure a high level of energy independence, France had for over 25 years based its energy strategy broadly on nuclear power. In 2002, its 58 operating reactors had accounted for 78% of its electricity production. The French authorities had organized a public debate on energy between March and May 2003 with a view to determining France's general energy policy over the next 30 years. The debate, which had confirmed the need for a diversified energy supply in which nuclear power retained a recognized place, was to be followed at the end of 2003 by the submission to parliament of a guideline law to define national policy and priorities.

39. With the current global context favourable to nuclear power, international cooperation involving the Agency was essential. Innovative designs for a new generation of safer, more competitive systems would be called for which would be capable of generating less long-lived radioactive waste while also meeting global energy needs and helping to ensure sustainable economic and social development. They should also make it possible to combine electricity generation with other applications, such as seawater desalination or hydrogen production. France had participated actively in the Generation IV initiative and was closely following the work under INPRO, and it welcomed the efforts that had been made to achieve complementarity and synergies between those two projects.

40. The development and transfer of nuclear techniques must be accompanied by a long-term strategy for knowledge and competence management aimed at preserving expertise and training the experts who would be needed in research and industry. France would provide active, substantial and specific support to the Agency's activities in that area given their vital importance for the future of the nuclear industry.

41. For the longer term, France attached particular importance to implementation of the ITER project as a vital step towards controlled nuclear fusion. That ambitious global project, involving close international cooperation, had already received Europe's support, and indeed France had proposed Cadarache as a possible site in view of its excellent scientific and technical environment.

42. Mr. OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government had called for a serious initiative in the United Nations Security Council early in the year to establish a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, reflecting the will of all States in the region except Israel. Those States, again except Israel, had already acceded to the NPT and placed their nuclear facilities under safeguards. Israel continued to be the only State in the region with a

nuclear arsenal, contrary to all international resolutions and treaties. Moreover, owing to Israel's intransigence, the Director General had been unable to fulfil his mandate from the General Conference to apply the Agency's comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear facilities in the region, which was a precondition for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Syria therefore called on the General Conference to pass a resolution reflecting the factual situation as a first step towards achieving those goals. While he appreciated the Director General's idea of holding a forum on the proposed nuclear-weapon-free zone, he feared it would serve no purpose if Israel continued to refuse to sign the NPT.

43. The bloodletting in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel's savage and suppressive policies there and in the occupied Golan had shocked the entire world. Israel was still using its security concerns as a pretext for its policy of nuclear deterrence without being subjected to any international pressure to change its ways.

44. In contrast to Israel, which had been obstructing peace, the Syrian Government had adopted the approach of a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option that would ensure the restoration of rights and hold out the prospect of a decent life for all parties concerned.

45. The Agency's departure from the principle of zero-real-growth budgeting which had been followed for the past fifteen years was acceptable in view of the need to meet the Agency's resource requirements. He welcomed the postponement of deshielding until 2008 to alleviate the financial burden on developing States. It was necessary, however, to provide more predictable and assured resources for technical cooperation. The idea of integrating the TCF into the Regular Budget or of establishing a mechanism to ensure that States honoured their financial commitments was no less important than the decision to allow real growth in the Regular Budget. He was in favour of an increase in TCF resources commensurate with the increase in the Regular Budget as soon as a suitable mechanism for securing the necessary resources was established.

46. He regretted that the rate of attainment mechanism agreed to by developing States in 2000 in the hope that TCF resources would be increased in return for their consent to gradual deshielding with respect to the safeguards component of the budget had not achieved the desired result. He was therefore looking forward to discussing specific proposals for achieving that goal at the next TACC meetings in November. He indicated that his country had fulfilled all its financial obligations to the Agency.

47. Agency technical cooperation projects had made a major contribution to sustainable development in his country. The Model Project on the development of technical capabilities for sustainable radiation and waste safety infrastructure had made considerable progress. The first and second milestones — development of the national regulatory framework and control of occupational radiation exposure — had already been approved, and efforts were under way to complete work on the other milestones in cooperation with the Agency as soon as possible. An environmental monitoring action plan and programme had been established, and a national emergency plan had been approved.

48. Progress had been made in the current year at the Nuclear Medicine Centre of the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria, whose cyclotron facility had started production of radiopharmaceuticals and radionuclides under a strict quality control regime. The project would greatly assist in upgrading the country's health care system. Syria was grateful for the Agency's assistance in the form of experts and of training in international laboratories for national technicians.

49. The interregional project on saline groundwater and wastelands for plant production was being supplemented by a national project on the exploitation of saline land.

50. Within the framework of promoting a nuclear safety culture, his country had signed a contract with the Agency to translate into Arabic and to distribute the *IAEA Bulletin*, which had previously been published only in the other official languages. The first issue for 2003 had already been translated and printed, and 1000 copies would be distributed to universities, Arab scientific institutions and interested Arab organizations. He was also pleased to announce that the third cohort of students had recently completed the regional postgraduate course at Damascus University leading to a diploma in radiation protection and safety of radioactive sources. The course was based on cooperation between the Agency and the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria. The fourth cohort, comprising students from all Arab States, had just started work. The training course was a basic component of a well-established nuclear safety culture and formed part of the postgraduate curriculum at Damascus University. His country was willing to enrol more Arab students in the course.

51. During the previous year, the Atomic Energy Commission had received twenty-four Arab trainees with fellowships from the Agency and had hosted eight regional courses under the Agency's auspices. In addition, the Agency had used the services of eight cost-free experts from the Commission.

52. Early in the year, Syria had hosted the first meeting of ARASIA's Board of Representatives, which had resulted in ARASIA's first adopted guidelines and operational rules. It had also volunteered to act, through the Atomic Energy Commission, as a secretariat for the States party to ARASIA. Under the Agency's auspices, the States party to the Agreement had already embarked on two regional projects: on comparative assessment of electricity generation options and on strengthening regional training and certification capability in non-destructive testing. He called on Arab Member States in West Asia to complete their ARASIA accession procedures.

53. Mr. KORBI (Tunisia), noting that his country had been one of the first to join the Agency, said it had been giving high priority to the development of the science and technology sector as the cornerstone of its development effort. The tenth development plan (2002–2006) reflected the Government's clear political will to support the sector. A key measure among the many decisions and procedures adopted was the doubling of appropriations for research, which would reach 1% of the country's GDP in 2004.

54. The most important challenge at the national level had been to meet the increasing need for staff and research structures at higher education establishments and research institutes, and to promote technological innovation to enhance companies' competitiveness through continued consolidation of multidisciplinary technological focal points and 'institutional incubators' around university centres so as to create the largest possible number of job opportunities, especially for higher diploma holders, who would number around 85 000 by 2010, or 50% of total job applicants.

55. His country attached great importance to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and had therefore been following advances in that area with interest; in particular, the design and manufacture of small and medium-size reactors enabled small countries to generate power and desalinate seawater in quantities commensurate with their needs and capabilities, and he hoped the Agency would continue to support that technology in view of its positive impact on sustainable development. In that context, his country had joined the expert group on desalination set up by the Agency in cooperation with the French Atomic Energy Commission.

56. Current collaboration between Tunisia and the Agency consisted in the funding of many technical cooperation projects under national, regional or international programmes and the provision of training opportunities and expertise to specialized national personnel, enabling them to use scientific instrumentation to further economic and social development. The Agency's assistance included: consolidation of the laboratories attached to the National Nuclear Science and Technology Centre, in particular the sterile medfly production unit, which was helping to control a pest found throughout

North Africa; a study of water resources and monitoring of dam water leakage; consolidation of a model food irradiation unit at the Centre helping to enhance the export capacity of many national enterprises; and strengthening of the non-destructive testing service. He trusted that the Agency would continue its support so that his country could establish an advanced scientific and technological base for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in cooperation with the Agency and friendly countries. Tunisia was also working with sister Arab States at the bilateral level and in the Arab Maghreb Union, the Arab League and the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, based in Tunis, and he called on the IAEA to give greater attention to cooperation and scientific partnership with the latter Agency in particular so as to support its regional role. Tunisia's contributions to technical cooperation among African countries, especially under AFRA, included the hosting of scientific meetings and training courses; for example, it had organized four important scientific events in 2002 and was contributing to four similar events in 2003. It had also participated in study courses and workshops in Member States. His country's support for AFRA stemmed from its firm belief in the need for greater South-South coordination and its leading role in North-South cooperation.

57. He thanked the Agency staff and experts for their efforts to implement AFRA since its inauguration in 1990, which had produced tangible results. AFRA was now a tool for scientific and technical development and an important key to the future prosperity of African countries. He called on donors to support it in the light of the convincing evidence of its potential.

58. Tunisia firmly believed that cooperation in the area of nuclear safety would bring safety for all and that the peaceful use of nuclear technology would foster wide and sustainable development. It also believed that the accession of all States to relevant treaties, compliance with their provisions, and decisive action against illegal trafficking in nuclear materials would provide fundamental safeguards and assurances for all Member States. It therefore supported the Agency's efforts to enhance global nuclear safety.

59. Conscious of the need to limit the risks from the use of nuclear material and to prevent its deployment for illegal purposes, Tunisia had made consistent efforts towards the establishment of appropriate international mechanisms: it was a party to the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, it worked jointly with the international community on strengthening the safeguards regime, and indeed, it was involved in all international endeavours to promote nuclear safety, safeguards, non-proliferation and the banning of nuclear testing.

60. In line with the Agency's aims and guidance, his country had sought the Agency's assistance in developing a national control and accountability system, in particular through the training of Tunisian safeguards specialists. Meanwhile, considerable progress had been made in studying the Model Additional Protocol in preparation for its ratification.

61. Tunisia could not but express grave concern at Israel's continued refusal to accede to the NPT. It called on Israel to cooperate with the Agency by submitting its nuclear installations to safeguards in accordance with the relevant international resolutions, a step that would build confidence among countries and move forward the peace process in the Middle East. It also wished to renew its appeal for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in addition to the one already established in Africa.

62. Tunisia was consistently opposed to all forms of terrorism and considered international solidarity to be the optimum framework for cooperation among all countries in resisting terrorism.

63. In view of the prevailing global circumstances, with glaring social and economic disparities among States and within individual communities, the President of Tunisia had called on world leaders and United Nations and other international bodies to create an international solidarity fund whose assets, including voluntary contributions, would be used to alleviate poverty and to develop the

poorest regions of the world. The international community had responded positively to the President's call and agreed to the creation of the fund.

64. In that context, he noted that his country had paid its contribution to the Agency's budget for the current year and was about to pay its contributions to the TCF and its assessed programme costs.

65. In conclusion, he said that the Agency had the capability, through its technical cooperation programme, to achieve the lofty objectives for which it had been founded, namely dissemination of knowledge, technology transfer and capacity-building in Member States for the peaceful use of nuclear technology to improve human living conditions in both developed and developing countries. Radionuclides had applications, for example, in food security, water resource management, human health, environmental protection, and scientific research in general, and the Agency had an important role to play in strengthening international cooperation to promote the nuclear safety concept, preventing terrorist acts, disseminating a culture of solidarity, and bridging the gap between North and South.

66. Mr. BUTT (Pakistan) said that the dramatic changes in perceptions of international peace and security since the turn of the century were presenting taxing challenges to the Agency, which was handling them with commendable skill and wisdom. Pakistan was gratified to note that in the process the statutory interests of Member States, particularly the developing countries, had been given due importance.

67. Pakistan was perhaps one of the most prominent developing countries in which the generation of electricity from nuclear power could play a vital role in economic development. The Agency's forecast for the use of nuclear power in the Asia region was a promising one, and Pakistan would expand the use of nuclear power in its economy as part of a proper energy mix and to counter the risks of industrial pollution resulting from economic growth. The excellent operational and safety record of its two nuclear power plants had encouraged Pakistan to acquire a third. In addition to generating electricity, some of those facilities would also be used to power desalination plants in the future. Pakistan was currently collaborating with the Agency in establishing its first demonstration desalination unit, and was also interested in playing a serious role in INPRO, so that it could benefit in future from safe, cost-effective and proliferation-resistant nuclear power plants.

68. The safety and security of its nuclear installations was as important to Pakistan as expanding its generating capacity, and it had been able to establish a strong safety culture. It had further reinforced the security measures around its nuclear installations in order to avoid any possibility of nuclear terrorism or illicit trafficking in nuclear material, and was pleased to renew its commitment to a safer world in line with the Agency's nuclear security plan. Pakistan wanted to see an early conclusion of the deliberations on amending the CPPNM in the hope that it would then be able to enhance its capabilities to protect its nuclear installations and material more effectively.

69. Pakistan attached the highest importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme. As for other developing countries, an important requirement for Pakistan was access to equipment and material from the industrially advanced countries. Embargoes and restrictions acted as an impediment to accelerating economic development in many countries which had attained a certain level of advancement with the help of the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Such embargoes and restrictions inhibited the Agency's efforts to assist the developing countries in making the transition from dependence to self-reliance, and Pakistan would strongly urge the advanced countries to take a fresh look at their policy of technology denial. Such a policy had not produced any useful results in the past; nor was it likely to do so in the future. The impact of the Agency's technical cooperation programme could be significantly enhanced if the developing countries were given better access to advanced technologies. SAGTAC should deliberate on the matter and advise the Agency on how to

facilitate the transfer of technology in an effective and sustainable manner. It would be helpful for Member States if SAGTAC's recommendations were periodically brought to their notice.

70. Pakistan wished once again to assure the world community that it was fully committed to the cause of Agency safeguards and would make every effort to keep the safeguards system fully functional and oppose any impediments which could negatively affect its smooth operation. Pakistan earnestly desired to continue fulfilling all its obligations under existing safeguards agreements and was confident that its cooperation with the Agency in that area would become stronger.

71. While fully acknowledging the importance of safeguards, Pakistan placed equal emphasis on a balanced approach with regard to the Agency's other statutory functions and firmly believed that maintaining a proper balance between promotional and safety- or security-related activities was essential to success. It was difficult to understand why the simple notion of harmonious balance should become a matter of contention with some Member States. There was a need for cohesion and greater understanding among all the Agency's members in order to advance the Agency's mandate, and thereby enhance its strength and credibility.

72. Pakistan greatly appreciated the role regional agreements were playing in supplementing the Agency's development activities and hoped that new management arrangements would strengthen the RCA. It also hoped that the RCA would retain its role as a regional agreement and would not be weakened because of an increasing influx of activities which could be implemented as national projects. Pakistan would like SAGTAC, SAGNA and SAGNE to study that aspect and advise the Agency as to how it should maintain a focused approach to its various regional development programmes.

73. Pakistan shared the Agency's concern regarding its continued financial constraints and believed that Member States must support it by providing the resources it needed so that it could fulfil its statutory obligations. A working group of interested Member States should be set up to study the matter and advise the Agency on how to overcome the financial problems in a realistic manner. Pakistan had consistently paid all its contributions in full and on time regardless of its economic problems.

74. Pakistan had made significant achievements in the past year in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy for the country's socio-economic development and wished to record its deep gratitude for the help it had received from the Agency's technical cooperation programme. In agriculture alone, the increase in revenues due to the application of nuclear techniques had been of the order of \$100 million per year, which would pay for the installation every six or seven years of a small or medium-sized nuclear power plant.

75. Pakistan also intended to participate in the World Nuclear University, and had recently joined the SESAME project.

76. Ms. KELLY (Argentina) noted with regret that the nuclear non-proliferation regime now faced serious challenges. Within the Agency, efforts should be continued to develop a consensus embracing as many countries as possible, with a view to creating an atmosphere of confidence and legitimacy of decisions. Priority must be given to preserving and consolidating multilaterally negotiated international norms, for instance by bringing the CTBT into force as soon as possible.

77. Countries such as her own had contributed to broadening the international consensus on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Argentina's policy in that regard was not confined to adherence to regional or global treaties and agreements: it also involved fulfilment of obligations undertaken, and a firm commitment regarding both its internal nuclear development and its role as a nuclear supplier. Accordingly, its fundamental concern was to ensure strict compliance with

international agreements relating to non-proliferation. She wished to express Argentina's appreciation for the actions taken by the Director General in that area, and for his efforts to foster an effective safeguards regime and a safety system designed to protect people and the environment from radiation damage.

78. Argentina also favoured a balanced approach to the question of safe transport of radioactive material. The Secretariat could play an important role facilitating dialogue between Member States on the issues identified in the conclusions of the International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material which had taken place in July 2003. Argentina was ready to contribute towards reaching the necessary consensus on the subject, in particular through the draft resolution that would be before the General Conference.

79. Another important event had been the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources in March. The Action Plan on that subject was an important contribution to the coordination of international efforts.

80. Concerning safeguards, her country was in favour of universal application of comprehensive safeguards such as those implemented under the NPT. In discussions on the verification programme for the coming biennium, her delegation had recommended continued efforts to achieve greater efficiencies and savings without loss of effectiveness. On that basis, it had agreed, exceptionally, to a departure from the principle of zero growth and had supported the consensus on a significant budgetary increase to strengthen the Agency's activities. In that context, Argentina had recommended intensifying the Agency's cooperation with other verification bodies such as ABACC.

81. Her country's activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had included development of radioisotope production for medical and industrial use, providing inter alia an important tool for irradiation of prototype research reactor fuel elements with high-density uranium. Argentina was continuing operation of its two nuclear power plants, which supplied 8–10% of the country's total electricity requirements.

82. Argentina welcomed the Agency's activities in the area of innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles and was participating in INPRO. The future survival of the nuclear power option would depend on the results of such studies carried out with international collaboration. While appreciating the important role played by the Agency in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technological development, Argentina wished to reiterate its support for the international safeguards regime applied and administered by the Agency and for export controls for sensitive technologies to ensure their use for exclusively peaceful purposes.

83. A recent example of bilateral cooperation involving Argentina related to the construction of a research reactor in Australia, an important initiative which would help to foster relations with that country.

84. Nuclear sector and regulatory institutions in Argentina, in cooperation with the IAEA, had continued to sponsor courses, workshops and scientific meetings while also providing training to students and scientists from abroad. At the same time, the country had made available to the Agency a considerable number of experts and lecturers. Particular mention should be made of the postgraduate course on radiation protection and nuclear safety for students from Spanish-speaking countries.

85. Argentina had a great interest in participating in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes as a supplier and looked to the Secretariat to establish transparent criteria and norms for the Agency's purchasing, particularly in Latin America.

86. Argentina had been among those supporting the amendment to Article VI of the Statute to increase participation in the work of the Board of Governors and hoped the General Conference would seek ways of accelerating the entry into force of that amendment.

87. Another subject of concern to her delegation was the large number of countries that risked losing the right to vote because their economic and financial situation had made them unable to pay their contributions. That issue should be dealt with in the context of a complete review of the criteria for assessment of contributions in international organizations.

88. Mr. ADAMOWITSCH (Germany) said that the Iraq conflict had again demonstrated the usefulness of the Agency as a reliable and central partner in the field of non-proliferation. Germany very much appreciated the work of the Director General and his staff in Iraq and supported continuing that work to resolve remaining questions regarding Iraq's past nuclear programme and further implementing the reinforced ongoing monitoring and verification system as an effective deterrent to Iraq's resumption of its nuclear weapons programme. To that end Germany was looking forward to the review of the Agency's mandate in Iraq as envisaged by Security Council resolution 1483 (2003).

89. The DPRK's nuclear programme had been a source of grave concern to the international community for years, and Germany welcomed the start of the six-party talks at the end of August 2003. The DPRK must reactivate its membership of the NPT and accept all obligations resulting from its safeguards agreement with the Agency. The DPRK could count on returning to the world community only if it fulfilled its obligations and contributed actively to the complete transparency of its nuclear activities.

90. Germany hoped that the situation regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran could also be solved in a satisfactory manner. That country had repeatedly promised full transparency, and Germany expected it to continue its full cooperation with the Agency, accepting all necessary inspections. Germany welcomed its announcement that it intended to start negotiations on an additional protocol and expected it to sign, ratify and implement such a protocol without preconditions at the earliest date. It was the only way for Iran to begin re-establishing the confidence which had been seriously undermined by lack of transparency and its various failures to comply with its safeguards obligations.

91. The developments in those countries had shown to many observers that the international non-proliferation system had to be strengthened. Germany therefore welcomed the initiative of the Director General in declaring that it was time for reform and calling for the international collective system to be reinvigorated to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Germany hoped that that initiative would not be disregarded, and that careful thought would be given to the issue. His country in fact had the impression that lessons were already being drawn and steps were being taken in the right direction. The European Union was working on a comprehensive strategy to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with one of the key objectives being the universalization and reinforcement of multilateral agreements by ensuring the detectability of treaty violations and strengthening the role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of compliance. In that context the Agency's safeguards system too should be reviewed and modernized.

92. Germany expected all countries to comply fully with their obligations, including the signing and ratification of the additional protocol, which now represented the safeguards standard and should be reflected in nuclear export control regimes as soon as possible. Germany called on all countries which had not yet concluded an additional protocol to do so at the earliest opportunity.

93. The events of recent years had reminded the world community what a fragile world it lived in, and had also demonstrated that governments and societies often reacted only after a major incident had occurred. They had shown that safety and security were core responsibilities in modern technological societies and that their basis was the maintenance and development of technical know-how and of

political, economic, psychological and even philosophical knowledge, and sometimes simply of human understanding. All fields of knowledge were interrelated in modern societies. Germany therefore strongly supported the Agency's activities in the field of maintaining and developing knowledge and know-how and hoped that the World Nuclear University initiative could be carried out. Nuclear expertise was important even for countries such as Germany which were phasing out nuclear energy, as the maintenance of nuclear know-how was still indispensable for reasons of safety, security, non-proliferation, transport, storage and environmental protection. Germany also supported all other forms of nuclear safety culture and particularly welcomed the progress made since the last session of the General Conference in implementing the Agency's programme to improve nuclear security and to protect against nuclear terrorism. Germany would be supporting the NSF to the tune of €1 million in the period 2004–2005. However, the methodology being applied for the use, storage and transport of radioactive sources still needed to be clarified and brought into line with that employed by the European Commission for the same purposes. The progress made over the past year in improving the Agency's emergency response arrangements had been an important step towards increasing its capability to protect people against radiological hazards originating from lost, stolen or abandoned radioactive sources. The increasing number of real events demonstrated the need for that expert capability.

94. The nuclear safety culture required constant training and development, and it was the Agency's task not only to contribute to those efforts but also to admonish Member States tempted to lessen their activities in that regard. Cooperation in the world nuclear community must be very close indeed to guarantee the safety of nuclear energy. The nuclear community must also inform and train the public so that it had an adequate understanding of the safety of nuclear energy. In that respect as well, the Agency had an important task to perform. The TCF was an important instrument for supporting developing countries in the various areas linked to the nuclear safety culture. Some developing countries had reached a very high level of nuclear know-how, and Germany hoped that INPRO would contribute not only to the development of new, innovative reactors but also, and above all, to safety, non-proliferation, and improved storage and environmental protection.

95. The Agency was confronted by an abundance, even over-abundance, of tasks, which were likely to increase rather than diminish, and which required the Agency to be adequately funded. There had been very complicated budget negotiations during the year, and finally a compromise had been reached. Germany had accepted the compromise, given the special and unique character of the Agency and its tasks, and given the political necessities, but it was going to continue its efforts to ensure that the Agency's budget was set up in the most efficient way. In that context, Germany very much appreciated the fact that the Board had recommended to the General Conference the appointment of the German Supreme Audit Institution as the Agency's External Auditor.

96. It was well known that Germany was phasing out nuclear energy. In two years' time German irradiated fuel would no longer be transported to other countries for reprocessing. The disposal problem had not been finally solved but slow, steady progress was being made. Germany remained committed to research in the nuclear field and would continue to collaborate closely with the Agency, especially regarding all aspects of the nuclear safety culture and matters of non-proliferation. The Agency remained the cornerstone in those important areas, and Germany would further support it to the extent possible.

97. Mr. VALECA (Romania) said that his country had adopted a long-term strategy and plan of action in October 2002 for the development of its nuclear sector. The strategy provided for specific activities at all stages of the nuclear cycle. In line with the Government's policy of developing nuclear power as a contributor to the national electricity supply, Cernavoda Unit 1 now covered 10% of electricity demand. As safety was a high priority, an interim depository for spent fuel had recently become operational at the plant. Romania's sound nuclear infrastructure and expertise would effectively

support the construction and operation of Cernavoda Unit 2 by 2005 to meet increased demand later in the decade. The national infrastructure would cover more than 50% of the investment. A feasibility study on construction of Cernavoda Unit 3 would be completed by mid-2004 by a Romanian company and international companies, and steps would then be taken to select members for a public-private partnership and to negotiate a framework contract.

98. An example of the Romanian Government's commitment to nuclear safety and security was the strengthening of the activities of the national regulatory body with the support of the Agency and the European Union. Romania had pledged in-kind contributions to the Agency's action plan on nuclear terrorism and in February 2003 had organized, in close cooperation with the Secretariat, a regional pilot course for south-eastern Europe on techniques for counteracting nuclear threats. A follow-up course was being contemplated as a further in-kind contribution to the NSF. At the national level, new regulations on physical protection, including the use of the design basis threat concept, had been adopted. Individual matrixes had been sent to each nuclear facility and operator with a view to improvement of physical protection systems, and regulations had been issued on qualifications of guards and security personnel for nuclear facilities.

99. The chapters of the accession negotiations with the European Union concerning environment and energy, including in particular the nuclear safety and radiation protection norms, had been completed and the recommendations contained in the 2001 nuclear safety report of the European Council's working group on atomic questions were being implemented. Romania's framework law on nuclear safety had been amended to allow the establishment of technical support organizations and to make the financing of regulatory activities more flexible by using extrabudgetary resources. A law on the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel had set up the National Agency for Radioactive Waste and a law on the promotion of nuclear activities and the peaceful use of nuclear energy had established the Nuclear Agency, which would coordinate bilateral and multilateral external cooperation, including with the European Commission and the Agency.

100. Romania was committed to fulfilling all its obligations under the NPT, safeguards agreement and additional protocol and to promoting a responsible export control policy. In February 2003 it had hosted a regional seminar on the promotion of the additional protocol in south-eastern Europe.

101. He thanked the Agency for its continuous support for Romania under the technical cooperation programme, especially through the provision of training and expertise. New European Union members from the region should remain eligible for assistance under the programme in the first years after accession. Romania would continue to support technical cooperation activities by training experts from developing countries, organizing regional seminars and workshops, and sharing information and expertise. He was confident that the Agency would continue to make full use of Romania's nuclear facilities for its international and regional training.

102. His Government attached great importance to the footnote-a/ project to convert the TRIGA research reactor in Pitești from HEU to LEU. He thanked the United States for its generous decision earlier in 2003 to provide \$4 million of financial support for the project.

103. Another high priority was the decommissioning of the VVR-S research reactor, which had been shut down by a 2002 governmental decision. The decommissioning plan had been submitted to the Agency in May 2003. It was hoped that the Agency would support the plan to return the spent fuel from the reactor to the Russian Federation.

104. Romania counted on international cooperation, especially from the Agency and countries with similar nuclear programmes, in training human resources at the undergraduate and postgraduate level for the proper operation of the nuclear sector.

105. Romania, whose term as a member of the Board of Governors would end during the current session, had ratified the 1999 amendment to Article VI of the Statute in 2001 and urged all Member States to follow suit.

106. Romania supported the draft programme and budget for 2004–2005 and trusted that the Agency would preserve the balance between its statutory responsibilities and its technical cooperation activities. His country would continue to make regular payments to the TCF and the Regular Budget.

107. Mr. FRANIĆ (Croatia), deploring the terrorist bombing in Baghdad that had claimed the lives of so many United Nations staff members on a peace mission in Iraq, said that the battle against terrorism must continue to be a high priority for every State. The Agency was an indispensable institution in that context.

108. Dramatic developments in Iraq, the DPRK and the Islamic Republic of Iran also attested to the importance of the Agency. A positive resolution of the issues involved would benefit both the countries concerned and the international community as a whole. Member States had an obligation to provide the Agency with all necessary support in that regard.

109. As one of the first countries in which an additional protocol had entered into force, Croatia welcomed the conclusion by Cuba of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol and the conclusion by Iceland of an additional protocol. He urged Member States that had not yet signed or ratified safeguards agreements and additional protocols to do so as soon as possible.

110. Croatia had also been one of the first ten countries to accept the amendment to Article VI of the Statute. He invited other Member States to accelerate their internal procedures to ensure its early entry into force.

111. Croatia greatly appreciated the Agency's technical cooperation, which facilitated the transfer and implementation of nuclear knowledge and know-how. Among the wide range of ongoing or completed projects in Croatia, he drew attention in particular to the use of nuclear technology in landmine detection, a project whose outcome could make a valuable contribution to demining efforts worldwide. All six projects proposed for 2003–2004, ranging from medical applications to combating illicit trafficking, had been accepted. He expressed regret, however, at the delay in implementing project CRO/0/006 on the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials.

112. Croatia welcomed the growing number of foreign experts visiting its research institutes and the University of Zagreb under Agency fellowships. It hosted a number of training courses, workshops and seminars each year under the technical cooperation programme and invited the Agency to make greater use of Croatia's capacity and infrastructure for that purpose. He also expressed the hope that the visit in June 2003 by the Agency's Deputy Director General for Nuclear Sciences and Applications to the Center for Marine Research of the "Ruder Bošković" Institute in Croatia would encourage the Agency to make greater use of that institution's knowledge and capacity.

113. Given the importance of education in nuclear and radiological science and of preserving nuclear knowledge, he welcomed the inauguration of the World Nuclear University.

114. Although Croatia was a net recipient country, it was fully aware of the Agency's reliance on financial contributions to meet ongoing requests and needs and had therefore paid its full share to the TCF and discharged all other financial obligations in full and on time.

115. With regard to the Krško nuclear power plant, built on the territory of Slovenia and jointly owned by Croatia and Slovenia, he was pleased to announce that the lengthy dispute over joint operation had been resolved in 2001 by means of a compromise agreement, which Croatia had ratified in July 2002 and Slovenia in March 2003. Joint management of the plant had been restored in

April 2003 and Croatia had begun to receive its half of the plant's electricity production. The two Governments had decided to elaborate jointly a programme for decommissioning and radioactive waste and fuel management. He welcomed the Agency's positive response to the request for assistance in implementing the project, which would provide a long-term solution to safety and security issues.

116. He commended the Agency on its organization in 2003 of the International Conferences on Security of Radioactive Sources and on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material. Croatia also looked forward to participating, not least through the elected Croatian Vice-President, in the first review meeting under the Joint Convention.

117. Mr. CARRERA DORAL (Cuba) said that his country had always staunchly supported general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, under strict international control. The NPT had been a first step in that direction, albeit flawed and discriminatory because it permitted a club of nuclear Powers to shirk their practical disarmament responsibilities. Nevertheless, Cuba had acceded to the NPT in November 2002 and had ratified the Tlatelolco Treaty in October 2002 as an indication of its commitment to multilateralism and world peace, even though it was the target of sanctions and increased hostility on the part of the sole nuclear Power in the Americas.

118. On acceding to the two treaties, Cuba had immediately opened consultations with the Agency with a view to signing both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. Although it could have settled for an agreement corresponding to a small-quantity country, his Government had opted to sign standard instruments as a mark of its support for a strong, effective and efficient safeguards regime. The instruments would be signed during the current session of the General Conference. He thanked the Secretariat for ensuring that the consultations proceeded in an atmosphere of trust and transparency.

119. The eighteenth session of the OPANAL General Conference would be held in Havana in November 2003, and on that occasion Latin America and the Caribbean would be declared the world's first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone.

120. Cuba had always maintained that it was possible to reach a negotiated settlement of the issue of the DPRK's nuclear programme. He thanked the Director General and China for their information on the subject.

121. He fully supported the statements by the non-aligned NPT States at the recent session of the Board of Governors on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was the Agency's duty to take all necessary steps to ensure that all States complied fully with their safeguards obligations, but Cuba opposed any attempt to prejudge or to politicize the discussion concerning a country's nuclear programme. The Director General had made it clear that the verification process had not been completed, so that no definitive conclusions could yet be drawn. Moreover, Iran was cooperating with the Agency in the process of investigation. Cuba was confident that it would continue to show transparency and goodwill in respect of its NPT commitments and welcomed its decision to open negotiations on the conclusion of an additional protocol. It was unacceptable to encroach on a State's sovereign right to accede to an international instrument whenever it saw fit. Accepting such a precedent would have an adverse impact on international relations. Cuba would use its powers of advocacy to prevent any mishandling of the issue of Iran's nuclear programme from unleashing a new international crisis and strongly supported political and diplomatic efforts to reach a settlement that was acceptable to all parties, that remained within the framework of the Agency, and that respected the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

122. He reiterated the importance of the endorsement by the Non-Aligned Movement, in the final document of its thirteenth summit conference, of the aspiration to declare the Middle East a

nuclear-weapon-free zone, which would require Israel to place its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards.

123. The use of nuclear technology had had a tangible impact on Cuba's priority development programmes. The country had benefited from technology transfer under the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Its performance indicators were excellent and the resources allocated had been put to the best possible use. Cuba had therefore systematically honoured its financial commitments to the Agency in spite of its economic difficulties. Cuban specialists had also transferred the expertise acquired through technical cooperation projects to other countries and regions under Agency programmes.

124. Since the fourth session of the ARCAL Technical Coordination Board, held in Havana in June 2003, Cuba had assumed the presidency of ARCAL for a period of one year. He was confident that the Agency's support for ARCAL, and hence for technical cooperation among developing countries, would be intensified in the future.

125. The recruitment of Agency personnel should be based on efficiency, technical competence and integrity, while respecting the principle of geographical distribution and seeking an increase in the number of staff members from developing countries and of women staff members. Noting that 66.6% of staff employed in Cuba's science sector were women, he reiterated his country's willingness to place highly qualified professional staff at the Agency's disposal.

126. Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands) said that the continued delay in the entry into force of the CTBT, which, once operational, would considerably strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, remained a cause of concern to the Netherlands, as did the fact that the NPT, after more than 30 years of existence, was still not universally adhered to. Recent developments in Iraq, Iran and the DPRK and the threat of international terrorism constituted challenges to the non-proliferation regime and thus to global peace and security. Work within the IAEA, which was in essence the executive agency of the NPT, was of direct relevance to the preservation of the regime.

127. He was pleased to note that a framework of integrated safeguards was taking shape, since a solid system of comprehensive safeguards was crucial in preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons. It was a matter of urgency that States which had not yet done so should adhere to the safeguards system without delay, since safeguards not only guaranteed peace and security but also created the conditions in which the benefits of nuclear technology could be enjoyed to the full, thus enabling technical cooperation to flourish.

128. The Netherlands welcomed the steps taken to ensure a more stable financial foundation for safeguards activities, so that they could be less dependent on extrabudgetary contributions. He understood that after the agreed increase in the Regular Budget had taken effect, there would be a return to zero real growth. For the Netherlands, safeguards activities would remain the principal yardstick against which perceived needs for real budgetary growth would be measured in future.

129. His country deplored the low level of collection of contributions to the Regular Budget, and the increasing arrears that resulted. That situation needed to be remedied if the Agency was to be able to meet the financial demands made on it. While the Netherlands supported the extension of repayment schedules to 10 years, it saw no direct link between that arrangement and the restoration of full voting rights to Member States in arrears. Rather, it favoured a trial period during which progress made by the State concerned in paying off those arrears could be assessed.

130. Since technical cooperation in the nuclear field was important for the development of many countries, all Member States should contribute to the TCF in accordance with the targets set for them. The Netherlands had pledged its full share of the target for the year 2004. It saw no contradiction

between technical cooperation activities in general and activities designed to enhance nuclear security, and therefore had difficulty in accepting the ceiling of \$1.5 million set for the latter within the TCF. Such a ceiling was detrimental to the principles of technical cooperation and potentially damaging to its functioning.

131. The Netherlands called on all Member States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify the amendment to Article VI of the Statute.

132. His country was party to both the Nuclear Safety Convention and the Joint Convention and looked forward to a fruitful first review meeting under the latter. It intended to implement the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, to the extent that it did not conflict with European Union rules, and welcomed the related Action Plan.

133. The Netherlands supported all efforts to improve the security of nuclear material so as to prevent it from ending up in the wrong hands, and therefore favoured strengthening the CPPNM by means of a substantive amendment. However, it was not altogether satisfied with the progress achieved by the open-ended group of legal and technical experts in drafting that amendment and considered it vital that the Agency should continue, in parallel, to develop practical measures on the basis of existing rules and regulations.

134. His country had so far contributed €500 000 to the NSF and was pleased to state that it would be contributing a further €50 000 to that Fund. At the same time, it continued to believe that activities in the field of combating terrorism should be financed from the Regular Budget. Member States' commitment to contribute to the NSF should match their commitment to contribute to the TCF, but currently only 21 States had pledged contributions to the former. He noted that as of 30 April 2003 only 28% of contributions to the NSF had been spent, and hoped that the 60% that had been committed would be spent during the year.

135. In his country's view, the existing regime covering international transport of nuclear materials offered sufficient guarantees for safety, and IMO and ICAO were the bodies competent to issue transport regulations. The Netherlands therefore did not favour discussions within the Agency to develop additional rules and regulations concerning transport of nuclear material. In the same way, the Netherlands favoured a clear international system of nuclear liability and would not support a separate liability convention for nuclear transport; instead, any gaps in existing conventions should be closed. He therefore welcomed the creation of the INLEX group and called on other States to become party to the Joint Protocol.

136. Nuclear energy could only be an option in the overall energy mix once the safe storage of nuclear waste, as well as the safety of nuclear power plants, could be properly guaranteed. His Government had agreed to allow the Borssele power plant in the Netherlands to continue operation until the end of its technical lifetime in 2013 at the latest. Given the potential contribution of nuclear energy to limiting carbon dioxide emissions, the Netherlands was closely following developments in other countries, monitoring international research, and continuing to provide INPRO with a cost-free expert.

137. In conclusion, his country attached the utmost importance to the Agency's role in promoting non-proliferation and the safety and security of nuclear energy, and would continue to give it all possible support.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.