

General Conference

GC(49)/OR.3

Issued: February 2006

General Distribution

Original: English

Forty-Ninth (2005) Regular Session

Plenary

Record of the Third Meeting

Held at the Austria Center Vienna on Tuesday, 27 September 2005, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. BAZOBERRY (Bolivia)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(49)/INF/10/Rev.1.

¹ GC(49)/1 and Add.1.

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ALARA	as low as reasonably achievable
ARASIA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
HEU	high-enriched uranium
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INIS	International Nuclear Information System
INSServ	International Nuclear Security Advisory Service
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NDT	non-destructive testing
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPCs	national participation costs
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
R&D	research and development

Abbreviations used in this record: (continued)

SAGSI	Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation
SIT	sterile insect technique
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

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(49)/1 and Add.1. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion, the Committee had recommended that the items listed in those documents be taken up for initial discussion as indicated there. It had also recommended that the order of items be as proposed 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, 30 September 2005 as the closing date of the forty-ninth regular session and Monday, 18 September 2006 as the opening date of the fiftieth regular session, which would be held in Vienna.

4. The Committee's recommendation was accepted.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2004 (resumed) (GC(49)/5)

5. Ms. MAGUBANE (South Africa) congratulated the Director General on his reappointment for a further term of office. The current challenges facing the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime required strong visionary leadership and her country believed that Mr. ElBaradei would continue to lead the Agency in a way that would ensure that its authority and integrity were preserved. He could count on South Africa's fullest cooperation and support. She also offered her Government's heartfelt condolences to the people of the United States of America and the Caribbean countries following the loss of life and suffering which had occurred in that region as a result of two hurricanes.

6. The outcome of the NPT Review Conference in May 2005 had been a disappointment. The continued vitality and effectiveness of the NPT was dependent on the implementation of the Treaty regime as a whole. South Africa had consistently indicated that the continual reopening of the debate on obligations, commitments and undertakings might provide the logical foundation for others also to interpret, negate or withdraw from other parts of the NPT bargains. If agreements, arrived at at one conference were allowed to be rolled back at the next, the very premise upon which the multilateral system was based would be undermined. The case for non-proliferation rested on the NPT's primary objective of eliminating all nuclear weapons. There was growing concern that, while demands were being made for non-nuclear-weapon States to agree to new measures in the name of non-proliferation, concrete actions towards nuclear disarmament were being neglected. South Africa could not support unwarranted restrictions on the NPT's guarantee of access to nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes by States that were fully compliant with their obligations under the Treaty. The imposition of additional restrictive measures on some State Parties, while others were allowed access to such

capabilities only served to exacerbate existing inequalities that were already inherent in the NPT and undermined one of its central bargains.

7. South Africa was also disappointed that the Millennium Review Summit had failed to reach agreement on any non-proliferation and disarmament issues and hoped that Member States would heed the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to work together so that progress could be made on those important issues.

8. Her country welcomed the outcome of the latest round of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear programme and welcomed reports that that country had agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons and return to full-scope safeguards and the NPT. It looked forward to the earliest finalization of that matter and the normalization of relations with the DPRK. As for the resolution on Iran adopted by the Board on 24 September 2005, South Africa urged all parties to continue to exercise maximum restraint and to work relentlessly for a sustainable and peaceful resolution of the matter through dialogue and negotiations.

9. The global expansion of nuclear energy required increased international cooperation to ensure safety and security, including efforts that would prevent the exploitation of nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes. South Africa was committed to the continuous review and strengthening of measures aimed at the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction both nationally and internationally. However, real progress in securing the world from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons could only be achieved through concomitant progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. President Thabo Mbeki had recently stated that the situation should not be allowed to continue where nuclear weapon States obliged everyone merely to focus on the issue of non-proliferation while completely ignoring the demand of the overwhelming majority of humanity for the complete abolition of weapons of mass destruction, an objective South Africa had already achieved.

10. South Africa was a country with abundant uranium resources and its integrated energy plan recognized the need for nuclear power to play a role in meeting its energy needs. The decision to proceed with the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor project had been taken in the full understanding that its successful commissioning would contribute towards efforts aimed at meeting South Africa's objectives of enhancing sustainable socio-economic development. Recent trends had shown a continued increase in the market price of uranium and her country believed that the time had come for its mining community to take advantage of that price increase and the increased viability of domestic value addition to uranium, and to begin to refocus efforts on the development of the resource.

11. In July 2005, the South African Government had approved the conversion of the SAFARI research reactor at Pelindaba from HEU to LEU fuel. The Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa was progressing well with the establishment of technology for manufacturing LEU silicide fuel and the first lead test assemblies of that type would be loaded into the research reactor in the coming few months.

12. The Agency's peer review team had made a favourable report on the demonstration of the borehole disposal concept for spent sealed sources and the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa had been contracted to design and construct a system for the safe handling of spent high-activity radiation sources.

13. Under AFRA, South Africa had continued to send experts to participate in missions in AFRA member states in such fields as the promotion of national and regional self-reliance in nuclear science and technology, the conditioning and safe storage of spent sources and the auditing of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy facilities.

14. South Africa attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities and was concerned about the inability of the TCF to meet the legitimate needs of developing countries. Technical cooperation activities had the potential to contribute to combating and eradicating poverty and underdevelopment within the framework of development targets such as the Millennium Development Goals and the targets of NEPAD. Furthermore, South Africa recognized the important contribution which the application of nuclear energy for peaceful uses could make to sustainable development. Her country had nine Agency technical cooperation projects, all of which were running well. The programme to eradicate fruit fly infestation in the Western Cape Province using the SIT had achieved remarkable success in its pilot phase and had been expanded to include other pests. South Africa was grateful to the Agency for the excellent support it was receiving under the technical cooperation programme.

15. Her country supported the Agency's initiatives for the strengthening of international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety through active participation in the safety standards programme. It had recently submitted technical information, based on its experience, for the International Project on Evaluation and Demonstration of Safety for Decommissioning of Nuclear Facilities. The Basic Safety Standards were in wide use in her country which would like to see the comprehensive nature of that document retained in any future revision. South Africa had submitted its third national report under the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April 2005 and had undertaken a detailed review of the conclusions reached, with the objective of identifying future potential shortcomings and, where necessary, implementing preventive measures. South Africa's Cabinet had approved ratification of the CPPNM and internal processes were under way for South Africa to become a party in the near future to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The nuclear power sector had had a good safety record for a considerable period of time, and South Africa's plan was to identify measures that would ensure that complacency did not creep in and challenge that record. There was a need to strengthen the safety review mechanism through training programmes with an increased focus on compliance assurance personnel. South Africa supported the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources together with the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

16. It was imperative that the Agency remain diligent in its efforts to ensure peaceful use of nuclear technology and South Africa remained committed to assisting in those efforts.

17. Ms. DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) congratulated the Director General on his re-election.

18. Her country had continued to work with other countries to strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and verification. The recently created safeguards committee was an appropriate forum for the discussion of emerging challenges such as the updating of Annex II to the Model Additional Protocol, the obligations of States under United Nations Security Council resolution 1540, and export controls.

19. The Czech Republic had initiated its safeguards support programme in 2003. Agency safeguards inspectors were being trained at Czech nuclear power plants and uranium mines. Her country had provided voluntary financial support for the re-engineering of the Agency's safeguards information system, and called upon other Member States to do the same.

20. Her country supported the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. Through close cooperation with the United States, the Russian Federation and the Agency, it had returned approximately 6 kg of HEU to its country of origin at the end of 2004 and would soon be converting a training reactor from HEU to LEU fuel, returning HEU fuel elements to the Russian Federation. The Czech Republic was prepared to share its technology and expertise in that area.

21. In the area of nuclear security, the Czech Republic was preparing to ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and had endorsed the amendments to the CPPNM adopted in July 2005. It had fulfilled its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 and submitted its national report. It had contributed to the Nuclear Security Fund every year since the Fund's inception, assisting with the financing of improved physical protection at the Medzamor nuclear power plant in Armenia and at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, and with the enhancement of capabilities for the detection of nuclear material and radiation sources in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It would continue to provide highly focused support for nuclear non-proliferation and security activities.

22. The security and safety of radioactive sources was another important aspect of nuclear safety and security. The Czech Republic had endorsed the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. It had provided both funding and expertise for the establishment of national registries of sources, the safe disposal of orphan sources and the creation of an appropriate legislative and institutional framework in the countries of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. Czech experts considered Radiation Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources Infrastructure Appraisal missions, combined with periodic self-assessment, the most appropriate tools for improving her country's own performance in that area. With its long experience in the application of the ALARA principle, her country was ready to share its expertise in the coordination of ALARA networking.

23. Minimizing the exposure of patients to radiation during medical treatment was a long-term goal in which the Agency played an important part. A Czech radiotherapy department had recently undergone one of the first international audits. Her country believed that systematic and sustainable training to upgrade the skills of medical staff, especially the younger generation, was essential. The Centre of Competence for Radiation Oncology, Radiology and Nuclear Medicine in the Czech Republic would disseminate the results achieved in that field.

24. It was essential for the Agency to strike a balance between the increasing demand for its programmes and the resources available to it. Since the late 1990s, the Czech Government had made annual extrabudgetary contributions, in particular to the technical cooperation programme, the safeguards support programme and the Nuclear Security Fund. Those contributions amounted to over US \$900 000. In future, her country would be striving to achieve more harmonized planning of its extrabudgetary contributions with Agency management, taking into account the overall work programme.

25. In conclusion, she said that her country remained committed to playing its due role as a responsible member of the Agency.

26. Mr. ABRAHAM (Haiti) said that the Annual Report for 2004 showed how much the Agency's cooperation programme had been doing to meet the essential development needs of Member States. His Government had taken note with considerable interest of the Agency's HIV-1 epidemiology and molecular immunology project, which testified to the organization's commitment to the international effort to combat the AIDS virus. The Agency had implemented a number of technical cooperation projects in Haiti and his country was increasingly interested in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. With the Agency's help, it hoped to attain the level of other countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

27. The Agency had an important role to play in assisting countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, it should give greater importance to a more incisive information policy to help overcome certain prejudices about nuclear energy, which were due largely to a misunderstanding of the potential of techniques used in the nuclear science and technology field. Haiti

had ratified the ARCAL agreement with a view to contributing to the promotion of nuclear science and technology to the extent that its limited resources allowed. The Agency, which was cooperating with other international organizations such as the WHO and UNESCO on projects of interest to developing countries, should intensify such initiatives with a view to establishing a strategic partnership among United Nations bodies for providing assistance to countries in attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

28. LDCs would have to make an enormous effort if they were to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The Agency's technical cooperation programme already provided support in the areas of energy, water, agriculture and the environment. However, in view of the special needs of LDCs, he urged the Agency to set up a working group to deal with those needs and help the LDCs close the gap in nuclear science and technology and devise and implement a policy for the management of expertise. Tangible success in that endeavour would have a positive impact on the organization's image.

29. His Government fully supported the measures taken to protect against nuclear terrorism, whether in the framework of the CPPNM or resolutions adopted by the Agency and the United Nations. The fight against nuclear terrorism would ensure a safer world for future generations. That was all the more important because the increasing scarcity of traditional energy sources meant that nuclear energy would play a growing role in the production of electricity in the years ahead. Haiti was convinced that the international legal framework comprising the NPT, safeguards agreements, additional protocols and the CPPNM was sufficiently sound to guarantee the safe utilization of nuclear energy in the future.

30. Speaking the preceding day, the Director General had expressed surprise at how little electricity was available to the vast majority of the population in the Third World and had observed that something had to be done so that people in underdeveloped countries could enjoy the benefits of modern technology. Without energy, the LDCs would not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Haiti was pleased that the Director General had urged Member States to define and develop national and regional energy planning programmes and had indicated that the Agency would cooperate with them in that regard.

31. For some time, Haiti had been receiving technical assistance from the Agency in the areas of energy planning, radiation protection, agriculture and radiotherapy. For the period 2006–2010, those activities would become part of a CPF aimed at improving the focus of technical assistance and coordinating it with Haiti's development policy. His presence as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti testified to his Government's determination to cooperate more closely with the Agency, as well as with other developing countries, in the framework of South-South technical cooperation.

32. The United Nations was very active in Haiti at present and it was important that the Agency make its presence felt within the United Nations system, because nuclear techniques could contribute effectively to Haiti's development and help it attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Haiti was convinced that nuclear energy had an enormous potential for promoting sustainable development.

33. In conclusion, despite its financial difficulties, his country would do everything in its power to pay its arrears of assessed contributions and contribute to the TCF for 2006.

34. Mr. BAHRAN (Yemen) commended the Agency on its activities aimed at promoting, inter alia, nuclear, radiation, transport waste and safety, strengthening of the safeguards regime and action against illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources.

35. Yemen's National Atomic Energy Commission had an outstanding record in ensuring radiation protection and the safety and security of radioactive sources. The reports of the peer review mission and the INSServ mission conducted by the Agency at Yemen's request had indicated that the Commission, established in 1999 as an independent regulatory body, had been assigned specific responsibilities and functions in keeping with international standards and, in particular, the Basic Safety Standards. The Commission had managed in a short time to develop an effective inspection, registration and licensing system, and was playing a proactive role in research into and control and licensing of radioactive sources. Furthermore, Yemen was now seeking to apply radiation controls on its borders and was thus becoming a model for other countries to emulate.

36. Yemen was currently implementing 15 national projects and participating in 23 regional projects supported by the Agency and focusing on the training of human resources in the areas of health, agriculture, water, industry and radiation protection. It also benefited greatly from ARASIA.

37. As a party to the NPT, Yemen had urged the recent NPT Review Conference to reach a consensus on strengthening the non-proliferation regime and applying it in all States without exception. His country had summarized its ideas in twelve points on which agreement should be reached. They included: universal accession to the NPT; making withdrawal from the NPT impermissible; the gradual reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear arsenals by halting military nuclear activities and development or modification of nuclear weapon systems, be they small or large, tactical or strategic; the establishment of a time frame for the final elimination of nuclear weapons and the introduction of safeguards against the military or political use of such weapons; the prohibition and criminalization of the illicit transfer of nuclear technology in keeping with Security Council resolutions; promotion of the lawful transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; affirmation of the importance of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, not only for national energy security but also to mitigate the damage caused by fossil fuels, in particular climate change caused primarily by greenhouse gases; and ensuring the safety and security of nuclear material by adopting strict standards and preventing such material from falling into the hands of non-State actors.

38. Finally, he called on the participants in the Conference to imagine a world completely free of nuclear weapons but blessed with a virtually inexhaustible supply of nuclear fuel, enough to satisfy the demand of humanity for electricity and drinking water for centuries to come, and to eradicate poverty and solve the problem of climate change. Who could deny that it was a beautiful vision, however fanciful?

39. Ms. KAPIJIMPANGA (Zambia) offered condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America over the loss of human life and property following hurricane Katrina.

40. She endorsed the Board's decision to extend Mr. ElBaradei's appointment as the Agency's Director General for another term, as his leadership of the Agency had been exemplary, and she assured him of her country's continued support. She expressed the hope that Agency safeguards would be applied in the Middle East in a fair and transparent manner.

41. Nuclear proliferation continued to be of great concern among peace-loving nations and it was regrettable that the 2005 United Nations Summit had not reached an agreement on that issue. She urged Member States that had not yet done so to ratify the CTBT in order to enable the CTBTO to fulfil its mandate. Research into nuclear weapons by any Member State did not make the world a safer place. She urged all nations with nuclear weapons to start dismantling them. While even one nuclear weapon remained, humanity was not safe. As the world commemorated the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, she urged the Agency and Member States to spare no efforts to persuade the DPRK and Iran to return to compliance with the international safeguards regime, which aimed at

ensuring a secure and peaceful world. With that in mind, she urged continued dialogue between the European Union and Iran.

42. Zambia welcomed the Agency's activities in the field of protection against nuclear terrorism, which were of critical importance. Member States needed to work together to combat that threat.

43. The Agency's technical cooperation activities were crucial to the development of Member States. Improved delivery systems would result in improved performance. The new two-page project concept provided a much faster way for Member States to make possible project requests known to the Agency before full proposals were developed.

44. Construction of the cancer diseases treatment centre in Zambia would be completed in 2005. That centre would provide a very rare opportunity for cancer patients to access appropriate treatment at affordable prices through the application of nuclear technology. She hoped that many Member States would benefit from that technology, especially those around Zambia.

45. Demand for clean drinking water continued to rise as populations increased, and the provision and management of water resources was critical for sustainable development. She commended the Agency for the efforts it was making to promote groundwater exploration using isotope hydrology and hydrogeology.

46. She noted with satisfaction the Agency's continued activities to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety. Those areas were essential to ensuring that nuclear activities did not pose any danger to future generations. The Agency's support for improved radiation safety infrastructure, including legal reform, was an important undertaking and required support from all States. The scientific forum running parallel with the 49th regular session of the General Conference was dedicated to nuclear physics, which seemed to be in line with the recent workshop held in Trieste, Italy, on managing nuclear knowledge. It was essential to have a pool of young scientists to take over from the older generation if nuclear facilities were to be secured for the future. Her country would like to see more such meetings organized in the future, especially in the fields of operations and safety. Zambia had enacted new legislation to regulate such activities in line with international standards.

47. Her country continued to build on the achievements made through the Agency's technical cooperation activities. The following developments that had taken place since the preceding General Conference: isotope hydrology activities for groundwater pollution monitoring had been initiated; a cancer treatment centre had been constructed which should be operational in 2006; personnel had been trained in South Africa for the cancer treatment centre; the induced mutation breeding programme had been strengthened by training technicians and obtaining more equipment; nuclear medicine and neonatal hypothyroidism monitoring capacity had been strengthened by training personnel and obtaining equipment; performance of equipment in institutions receiving technical support from the Agency had been improved; and human resources in nuclear science and technology had been strengthened through the national human resource training project. Furthermore, Zambian scientists and technologists had played a critical role in the activities related to and the publication of IAEA-TECDOC-1294 on development and field evaluation of animal feed supplementation packages.

48. Zambia continued to support the Agency's technical cooperation activities within the framework of AFRA. Zambia had received several expert missions, in particular on radiotherapy, radiation protection and radioactive waste management, from AFRA member States. The AFRA framework had also been instrumental in strengthening various activities at institutions which were participating in AFRA projects. She called on AFRA to diversify its resource base so that it was not fully dependent on the Agency for its financial support.

49. In conclusion, she pledged her country's full share of its assessed voluntary contribution to the TCF for 2006.

50. Mr. ADAMOWITSCH (Germany) said that, in the preceding year, the Agency had again played a central role in the international non-proliferation discussion. Not least owing to the work of the Director General, world public opinion regarded the Agency as a pillar of global security and peace.

51. The lack of transparency regarding Iran's nuclear programme and recent unilateral measures gave cause for deep concern. More than two years after they had been raised, important questions remained unresolved. It was to be hoped that Iran would agree to provide objective guarantees that its nuclear programme would and could be used only for peaceful purposes. Germany was prepared to pursue a sincere dialogue with Iran if confidence could be restored. It would be regrettable if Iran chose the path of confrontation instead of cooperation, because that would lead to referral to the Security Council.

52. The situation on the Korean Peninsula also remained a source of great concern. The six-party talks were the appropriate forum for finding a lasting peaceful solution. It was essential to implement the joint statement.

53. Germany strongly supported the deliberations on strengthening of the international non-proliferation system. Further discussion of the findings of the expert group on multilateral nuclear approaches set up by the Director General was needed and his country looked forward to further consideration of that issue in the Board.

54. Germany regretted the unsuccessful outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. It was important to make progress on a number of outstanding issues and prepare the ground for the upcoming review process. The Agency could play a useful role in that respect by addressing matters within its own field of competence, such as establishing the additional protocol as the standard for compliance, assisting countries in developing their export control system, and dealing with the question of countries that attempted to withdraw from the NPT.

55. The new Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute would contribute to structuring the debate on important safeguards issues. Germany shared the view of many delegations that great care should be taken not to reopen or revoke the compromise reached by Committee 24. Any overlapping with SAGSI or interference with the Secretariat's safeguards tasks should also be avoided.

56. The universalization and implementation of additional protocols remained a high priority. Germany continued to believe that the ratification process for the additional protocol was too slow. Member States should live up to their commitment and ratify additional protocols as soon as possible. Those that had not yet signed an additional protocol should do so without further delay.

57. Nuclear safety and security was one of the most important issues in the nuclear field. The need for a worldwide safety culture would increase in the future thanks to the ageing of reactors, the shutdown of research reactors, the increase in the number of radiation sources, illicit trafficking and nuclear terror. In that connection, Germany welcomed the third review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the conference on nuclear security held in London and the conference to amend the CPPNM. With regard to the latter, he called upon all States to ratify the amendments to ensure their early entry into force. The adoption of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources had been an important step towards improving safety and security in connection with the fight against nuclear terrorism. Germany had been one of the first States to implement the Guidance.

58. With regard to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology had promising potential in the areas of food quality and safety enhancement, insect pest control, water management, health care and sustainable development. He expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts to highlight the growing need for cancer treatment applications in Africa. Germany was prepared to cooperate closely in the R&D field with universities and research centres in other countries.

59. Ms. GONZÁLEZ (Mexico) congratulated the Director General on his re-election.

60. The Annual Report for 2004 showed the Agency's achievements in promoting international cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear technology, global nuclear security and verification. However, it was regrettable that the 2005 NPT Review Conference had reached no substantive agreement. It was likewise discouraging that the final document adopted by the United Nations Summit in September 2005 had made no reference to disarmament or non-proliferation, thereby missing a major opportunity to contribute to peace and security in the world. Mexico called upon all Member States of the Agency to reaffirm their commitment to nuclear disarmament, the international non-proliferation regime and Agency safeguards.

61. The Mexican Government was particularly grateful to the Agency's Secretariat for its objective and professional work in the field of verification. The black market in sensitive nuclear technology and equipment made an effective and efficient safeguards system essential. At the same time, the inalienable right of all Member States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes had to be protected. Her country had noted with interest the Director General's proposals for assuring supplies of nuclear fuel in order to strengthen control and prevent illicit activities.

62. Mexico attached importance to strengthening the system of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which made a notable contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The first Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones had been held in Mexico City in April 2005 and had adopted the Tlatelolco Declaration, which emphasized the Agency's role in ensuring that nuclear energy was used only for peaceful purposes.

63. Her country supported the Agency's efforts to improve the safety of nuclear installations, combat nuclear and radiological terrorism and promote the universal application of the relevant international instruments. She welcomed the approval of the action plan for the safety of transport of radioactive material. The Agency should exploit all possible synergies with other international and regional institutions in order to develop an integrated approach to the security of nuclear installations. Mexico was particularly interested in the efforts to evaluate the effects of earthquakes on the safety of nuclear installations. The conference to consider and adopt proposed amendments to the CPPNM, held in Vienna in July 2005, had adopted a number of proposals intended to broaden the scope of the Convention. Unfortunately, however, it had not adopted an explicit statement that attacks on peaceful nuclear installations in peacetime constituted an infringement of international law.

64. Nuclear technology should be used to promote sustainable development in agriculture, food production, human health, water resource management, environmental protection and industry. Those activities should be better publicized in order to increase public awareness of the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Mexico would continue to support the Agency in its important work.

65. Mr. GAISENAK (Belarus) said that the past year had underscored the complicated situation which had arisen in the context of the NPT. One of the key features of that Treaty was the balance between the obligations and rights of non-nuclear-weapon State Parties. Such States made a voluntary commitment to refrain from creating and building up nuclear military capabilities. The Treaty also unambiguously confirmed the inalienable right of such States to develop research, production and use

of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It was difficult to overestimate the importance of the Agency's role in ensuring that that balance was maintained.

66. With regard to the Iranian issue, the objective position and highly professional work of the Agency had allowed a number of contentious technical matters to be resolved. Iran had made efforts to clarify those matters. Iran should cooperate with the Agency in the future in a spirit of full transparency. The issue should be solved within the existing international legal framework and not on the basis of politically motivated evaluations.

67. Belarus welcomed the announcement by the Government of the DPRK regarding its readiness to return to the NPT and hoped that the constructive cooperation between all parties to the six-party talks would speed up the search for mutually acceptable decisions and would help strengthen security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

68. His country had always been committed to strengthening the safeguards regime and had always strictly fulfilled its international obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement. Belarus had notified the Secretariat of its decision to sign an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement under the NPT and expected the text thereof to be approved at the Board's next series of meetings.

69. As a State party to the CPPNM since 1993, Belarus had taken part in the amendment process. It was satisfying that the diplomatic conference held in July 2005 had been a success. The entry into force of the approved amendment would make a significant contribution to reinforcing the regime for the physical protection of nuclear material and facilities. Belarus had begun the internal procedures necessary for the amendment to enter into force.

70. The International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, held in Bordeaux in June 2005, had constituted a significant step forward in that fundamental area of the Agency's work. The conference had underlined the importance of developing international cooperation to prevent illicit trafficking in sources and to implement the provisions of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Belarus was cooperating with the Agency on the issue of illicit trafficking and smuggling of nuclear and radioactive material. In 2004, the State border of Belarus had become an EU border. Ensuring radiation safety on that border therefore contributed to ensuring the safety of EU member States. In 2006 Belarus was proposing to hold a regional scientific and practical conference under the auspices of the Agency on the prevention of illicit trafficking and smuggling of nuclear and radioactive material on the Belarus/EU border and hoped that that initiative would be supported.

71. He thanked the Agency for the assistance it had provided under the Trilateral Initiative with the disassembly and transport to storage of a high-power gamma facility. He hoped that such cooperation would continue with regard to other facilities and obsolete irradiators at scientific research and training centres in Belarus.

72. His country was concerned over the plans to build a storage site in Lithuania, close to the border with Belarus, for spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste from the closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant. It hoped that Lithuania would adopt a constructive approach to the siting and safety of that facility. Given the Agency's recognized authority and its role in the development of international standards on radiation safety, his country assumed it would be involved in that process.

73. Dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident was a priority area of cooperation between the Agency and Belarus. His country highly valued the Agency's technical cooperation projects on Chernobyl focusing, inter alia, on the socio-economic rehabilitation of the affected regions. It hoped that such projects would be retained in future cycles.

74. The Agency had made a valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations Chernobyl Forum which the Director General had proposed setting up during his visit to Belarus in 2001. At the concluding conference of the Forum held in September 2005 in Vienna, the international community had looked at approaches for evaluating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and recommendations for rehabilitating affected regions. The work of the Forum was of great practical significance in optimizing policy on dealing with the consequences of the disaster and developing international cooperation on Chernobyl. It had also constituted a significant step forward in understanding the long-term consequences of the accident. The Forum showed that several questions, including some relating to the medical consequences of Chernobyl, remained open and required further study. The effectiveness of the Forum would depend not only on the recommendations made to the governments of the affected States, but also on continued collaboration to implement them. A number of changes needed to be made to the draft final document of the Forum presented to the conference, in particular with respect to the recommendations to the governments of the affected States. Belarus had passed the relevant proposals to the Secretariat and hoped they would be taken into account when finalizing the document. Additional public information work was also needed to ensure that the conclusions of the Forum were received appropriately by the international community and the affected populations. An international conference on strategies for the rehabilitation and sustainable development of affected regions was planned in Minsk in April 2006.

75. Mr. OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) congratulated the Director General on his re-election.

76. The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to adopt a final document demonstrated the need for universalization of the non-proliferation regime. The Conference had also failed to convince the international community that the goal of the NPT was to promote world peace by moving towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Although the Treaty established clear-cut obligations and rights for both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, changes in the international political environment had led to the imposition of severe restrictions on non-nuclear-weapon States that sought to exercise their inalienable right under the NPT to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

77. The Syrian Arab Republic had been one of the first States in the Middle East to sign the NPT, owing to its conviction that the possession of nuclear weapons by any State in that region would constitute a threat to other countries in the Middle East and the world as a whole. At the same time, it was eager to use nuclear technology for sustainable development and in the areas of health care and environmental protection but was thwarted by the restrictions on access imposed by certain States in violation of the NPT.

78. His country had always firmly opposed terrorism and was working for international agreement on a definition that distinguished between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples against foreign occupation. However, its efforts had failed for political reasons and owing to the prevalence of selectivity and double standards. The Syrian Arab Republic had signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in April 2005 and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in September 2005. Moreover, it was about to sign the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. In August 2005, the Syrian President had promulgated Legislative Decree No. 64 on radiation protection and the safety and security of radioactive sources which criminalized trafficking in nuclear material and conferred wide-ranging regulatory powers on the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria.

79. An item on application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East had been on the agenda of the General Conference for over a decade with the aim of persuading Israel, the only State in the region with nuclear weapons, to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear installations to Agency safeguards so that a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be established in the Middle East. Yet again, however, the Director General had been unable to fulfil the mandate entrusted to him in that regard under successive

General Conference resolutions. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons created a security imbalance in the Middle East but the major powers turned a blind eye to Israel's violations of the relevant international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 487 (1981). He urged the General Conference to adopt an objective and transparent approach to the draft resolution on IAEA safeguards in the Middle East at the current session and to name the only State in the region that was not subject to safeguards and was outside the non-proliferation regime. Israel, which pursued a terrorist policy against the people of Palestine and the Syrian Golan Heights in violation of all international treaties and customs, was concerned only with preserving its own security through a nuclear deterrence strategy.

80. He drew attention to the fact that the list of States belonging to the Middle East region given in footnote 1 to the Director General's report on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(49)/18) did not reflect the views of States in the region.

81. His country had joined the consensus on the draft resolution on that issue each year so as not to disrupt the proceedings of the Conference. However, Member States should be aware of how explosive the situation had become and he called on the Agency to play an effective role in support of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

82. The Syrian Arab Republic agreed in principle with the idea of convening a forum on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and would participate on condition that Israel acceded to the NPT and placed its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards. His country had submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council in April 2003 on behalf of the Arab Group aimed at ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, but the international situation at the time had militated against the success of the initiative. Syria had reintroduced the draft resolution in December 2003 and it was still pending before the Security Council until such time as the circumstances were more conducive to its adoption.

83. A number of reports had drawn attention to the danger of a radiation leak from ageing reactors in Dimona that the Israeli Government refused to decommission. He urged the international community to take speedy action to avert the possible environmental risk to Palestinian territory and neighbouring States. In that connection, he expressed the hope that the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat which was placed on the Conference's agenda each year would be given the attention it deserved. The international community should support the Arab Group in their attempt to have a resolution adopted in that regard in order to put pressure on Israel to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards. The Conference had a duty to take action against the Israeli nuclear threat, as it had done in the case of South Africa.

84. He thanked the Department of Technical Cooperation for its work at the national and regional level on behalf of developing countries, particularly its initiative aimed at rationalizing the submission of project proposals. In 2004 the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria had received 20 trainees from Arab countries and had provided the Agency with the services of six cost-free experts. The Commission would continue to support the technical cooperation programme through the regional centres of excellence.

85. With the support of the Agency and Damascus University, the Commission continued to run a nine-month study course on radiation protection and safety of radioactive sources. To date more than 100 radiation protection specialists from most Arab countries had completed the course and been awarded diplomas. He encouraged the Arab States to continue taking advantage of the opportunity thus offered for advanced training based on an internationally recognized curriculum.

86. ARASIA now had eight member States with the recent accession of Iraq and Qatar. It was implementing three regional projects: a comparative assessment of electricity generation options;

strengthening regional training and certification capability in non-destructive testing; and use of isotopes and geochemical techniques in the study of groundwater. He trusted that the Agency would continue to support ARASIA in its future projects.

87. Linking of the payment of NPCs to project implementation could lead to delays in the launching of national projects. Syria had always sought to pay its contributions to the Agency promptly, but it urged the Secretariat to reconsider that move because delays in bank transfers and the determination of exchange rates in some countries might waste time that could be spent on project implementation. The Secretariat should also submit a report on the advantages and drawbacks of amalgamating West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific into a single region.

88. The INIS Multilingual Thesaurus had been translated into Arabic by the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria, a major project that had been completed in only nine months by a team of highly competent translators. Moreover, his country had made a voluntary extrabudgetary contribution of over \$10 000 towards the translation of training materials on registration and verification of radiation sources into Arabic. The Commission had also continued for the third year to translate the *IAEA Bulletin* into Arabic.

89. Mr. POPOVIĆ (Serbia and Montenegro) said that the fight against global terrorism was a matter of the utmost importance and a common concern of all countries. Recognizing a potential threat, in 2002 Serbia and Montenegro had completed the removal of the fresh nuclear fuel from the site of the Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences to its country of origin, the Russian Federation, for enrichment reduction, as part of the Trilateral Initiative of the Agency, the Russian Federation and the United States. The assistance of those countries and other actors from the international community would also be needed for the removal of the spent nuclear fuel from the RA research reactor and other decommissioning activities at the Institute. The work of the Regulatory Commission for Nuclear Safety, the temporary regulatory authority established in connection with the Vinča decommissioning programme, could not be fully and properly completed without Agency assistance.

90. Serbia and Montenegro strongly supported a strengthened comprehensive safeguards system and the verification role of the Agency, which were essential to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. His Government had already informed the Secretariat that it had decided to sign an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement. There again, the Agency's assistance was indispensable.

91. He expressed satisfaction at the technical cooperation results achieved in the short period since Serbia and Montenegro had renewed its membership of the Agency, whose increased support was essential to help establish or improve further national infrastructures. He commended the dedicated efforts of the Department of Technical Cooperation, particularly the Europe Section. Serbia and Montenegro depended on the Agency's assistance to reach its national and international goals in such areas as decommissioning activities, the upgrading of the country's regulatory infrastructure for nuclear safety and security, and improved health care and environmental protection.

92. Serbia and Montenegro had received visits from experts in a variety of fields, including nuclear security, health, regulatory infrastructure and nuclear safety, and their findings and reports were an important tool for assessing national goals and developing plans for their realization. No less important was the improvement of professional knowledge and skills. In the past year, a number of experts and professionals had received training or taken part in conferences, meetings and workshops, where they had been able to compare experience and exchange information.

93. Agency assistance in implementing the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, as well as other international instruments, was indispensable. His Government fully supported the strengthening of safety and security systems and stressed the important role that

integrated and universal safeguards and verification played in all activities relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

94. Mr. AL-JASEM (Kuwait) congratulated the Director General on his re-election.

95. As Kuwait attached great importance to ensuring the safety and security of radioactive sources, it emphasized the need to establish mechanisms and implement guidelines aimed at controlling movements of radioactive material. International cooperation and coordination should be promoted through national and regional projects with the Agency and other relevant organizations.

96. To avert the threat of nuclear terrorism, action to place all nuclear material and installations in every country without exception under Agency safeguards was a matter of the greatest urgency. Kuwait was concerned to learn of cases of smuggling and illegal trafficking in nuclear material, and of black-market operators who exploited loopholes in the NPT and other relevant international treaties. A secure system was needed to guard against such threats. Kuwait had signed the amended CPPNM and the recently adopted International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, since it believed that concerted international action was necessary. It approved the action taken by some countries to afford protection against nuclear terrorism, provided that such action was intended to back up the non-proliferation regime and the Agency's mandate.

97. Praising the achievements of the technical cooperation programme in promoting the development of different sectors of society, he reaffirmed the need for assured and predictable sources of financing for the TCF in order to guarantee the success of existing and future projects and avoid budget shortfalls owing to the failure of some countries to pay their voluntary contributions. Although such contributions were theoretically voluntary, Member States had a political obligation to pay them in full and on time. In that connection, he noted that Kuwait always paid its contribution to the TCF promptly.

98. In addition to its development-related projects, the technical cooperation programme should seek to improve radiation protection infrastructure. It was also important to continue organizing training courses, especially at the regional level, to enhance national expertise in that area.

99. Kuwait was eager to increase its cooperation with the Agency in promoting peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology in the interests of more equitable and sustainable development for all countries and peoples.

100. The safeguards system was a main pillar of the Agency's work and the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. Kuwait therefore appreciated the Agency's efforts to strengthen application of the NPT, safeguards and the additional protocol. With a view to making verification activities more effective, States that had not yet done so should sign a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency and States that had already signed an agreement should consider signing an additional protocol. Moreover, parties to the NPT should honour their obligations under the Treaty and their safeguards agreement and work constructively with the Agency to deal with any queries or complaints.

101. Kuwait was disappointed that the outcome document adopted at the United Nations Millennium Review Summit made no mention of disarmament or non-proliferation. It continued to hope, however, that the international community would reach a consensus on the need for full and non-selective implementation of disarmament treaties, particularly the NPT, and for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

102. Safeguards should be applied to all nuclear activities in the Middle East region, since the Agency had the authority and expertise to provide assurances regarding compliance with safeguards agreements. Kuwait noted with concern, however, that the Agency's request to some countries with

advanced nuclear programmes to accede to the NPT and to apply Agency safeguards had gone unheeded, a fact that would adversely affect international peace and stability on account of the strategic importance of the Middle East region. He urged the Agency to redouble its efforts to achieve universal application of the safeguards regime to all nuclear installations and activities in the region as a first step towards creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

103. Kuwait regretted the fact that it had not been possible to convene a forum to discuss the experience of other regions with a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In that context, he welcomed the outcome of the recent Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones held in Mexico that had stressed the important role of such zones in promoting regional and international security and peace.

104. Security and stability would never be achieved in the Middle East so long as Israel was the only country in the region that refused to place its installations under Agency safeguards, impeding the universalization of the NPT. The persistence of that unnatural situation, in which one country's wayward behaviour was disregarded, would encourage other States to try to obtain nuclear weapons or to manufacture them.

105. It was to be hoped that the countries of the world were standing at the threshold of a new era in which they would overcome their differences and join together in ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction.

106. Mr. PANUPONG (Thailand) said that international developments in recent years, whether they related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or to terrorism, had ushered the world into a changed security landscape. While many had hoped that 2005 would bring a renewed phase of cooperation in addressing those emerging security threats, the distressing failures to strengthen nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at the 2005 NPT Review Conference 2005 and the 2005 World Summit had unfortunately put the international community back at a crossroads and had left the world more vulnerable than ever to the unprecedented risk of nuclear proliferation.

107. Thailand attached great importance to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and it recognized its instrumental utility in promoting the three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, his country was firmly committed to a policy of not developing, possessing, acquiring, using or transferring nuclear weapons and related material. At the regional level, the establishment of the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone in December 1995, in which Thailand and other member countries of ASEAN participated, stood as evidence of Thailand's commitment to the non-proliferation regime. The Bangkok Treaty establishing that nuclear-weapon-free zone had entered into force as early as 1997, and it and other nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world would contribute significantly to a climate of confidence that would be conducive to reducing proliferation risks.

108. With regard to emerging threats, his country viewed the revelation of a large network of nuclear traffickers and clandestine proliferation activities as cause for major concern. He strongly encouraged the international community, the United Nations and its relevant agencies to redouble their efforts to prevent weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and radioactive material, from falling into the hands of terrorists. Thailand had fully complied with United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and was reviewing its domestic legislation to facilitate more effective control of dual-use equipment. Furthermore, it was strengthening its criminal legislation and procedures to counteract terrorism. Against that backdrop, he was pleased to report that, on 14 September 2005, during the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New

York, the Prime Minister of Thailand had signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

109. Amid increasingly serious challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the Agency and its Director General had played outstanding roles in verifying compliance of obligations under the NPT and safeguards agreements in order to maintain international stability and security. The Agency had conducted its work in a professional and impartial manner, fulfilling its mandate in a way that enhanced transparency and confidence among Agency Member States.

110. Thailand reaffirmed its full support for the Agency's safeguards system, and its commitment to working with the Agency and other countries to encourage universal adherence to safeguards agreements and additional protocols. It had concluded and signed an additional protocol with the Agency on 22 September 2005, full implementation of which was envisaged once the constitutional requirements for its entry into force were met. He congratulated the two other ASEAN countries, Singapore and Malaysia, that had chosen to do the same at the most recent Board meeting, which his country saw as a positive contribution by ASEAN to the Agency's safeguards regime.

111. Another area of great concern to his country was nuclear security. Thailand was strengthening its domestic legislation and measures to secure and physically protect nuclear material against theft, sabotage or access by unauthorized persons. Thailand commended the Agency's efforts to enhance the security of nuclear and radioactive sources and welcomed the outcome of the diplomatic conference held in Vienna in July 2005 to consider and adopt proposed amendments to the CPPNM. The Thai Government was in the process of reviewing the specific amendments to the Convention with a view to acceding to it at the earliest opportunity.

112. His country placed particular emphasis on cooperative action to ensure the safe transport and use of radioactive sources. It highly appreciated the Agency's important role in helping Thailand improve its safety standards. Thailand was accelerating the process of acceptance of the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources with a view to completing that process by the end of 2006.

113. Thailand was following closely the situation on the Korean Peninsula as it had implications for the stability of the entire Asian region. It welcomed the joint statement issued following the fourth round of the six-party talks, and was encouraged to note that the issue was being settled peacefully through diplomatic means. He congratulated all parties concerned for their commendable efforts and expressed the hope that they would fully implement the commitments contained in the joint statement, so as to build a strong foundation for the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

114. With respect to the implementation of NPT safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran, his country believed in the importance of the inalienable right of States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and in the obligations States accepted under NPT safeguards. In the light of the adoption by the Board on 24 September 2005 of the resolution contained in document GOV/2005/77, his country hoped that all parties concerned would show the utmost restraint and seek to resolve the issue peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy. A confrontational approach would not be constructive to the preservation of regional stability and should therefore be avoided in as far as possible.

115. Thailand fully supported the work of the Agency, particularly in the fields of peaceful uses and civilian nuclear applications. While the world strove to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it was within the realm of reason to appeal to all nuclear-weapon States to continue to work together to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. That was an essential step in creating an environment conducive to the maintenance of international peace and security.

116. Mr. CHIKANDA (Zimbabwe) said that the Agency's important role in the field of international nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and development should be strengthened. The Agency should be allowed to execute its mandate, in accordance with its Statute and the NPT, without hindrance, prejudice or unwarranted political limitations. It should also promote development and further the inalienable right of Member States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and should facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information between States.

117. The Agency's technical cooperation activities played an effective role in combating poverty in developing countries and made a significant contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. His country was pleased at the Agency's continuing focus on reliable food supplies, safe and adequate water and sanitation, better remedies for human and animal health problems, and sound environmental management. Science and technology should serve to remove obstacles facing the poor and to overcome problems resulting from past injustices.

118. Zimbabwe appreciated its fruitful cooperation with the Agency, which was set to increase in the areas of health, water, non-destructive testing and agriculture. The CPF for 2005–2009, which had just been finalized, would further enhance implementation of technical cooperation programmes in Zimbabwe. His Government appreciated the assistance and guidance it had received from the Agency at the meeting of national consultants held in Vienna from 27 June to 1 July, which had enabled it to finalize the CPF.

119. Zimbabwe's cooperation with the Agency on nuclear applications in food and agriculture focused on animal disease, and desertification and drought issues. The Agency's assistance with protection of the environment and sustaining of crop production was essential to ensuring food security in Zimbabwe and in southern Africa as a whole. It was also crucial to enhancing Zimbabwe's ability to diagnose animal diseases and to the setting up of quality assurance schemes to help veterinary laboratories meet internationally recognized standards and restore the country's livestock market.

120. The Agency was assisting Zimbabwe through the application of stable isotopes to assess the efficacy of nutrition programmes for HIV and AIDS patients, pregnant women and children. Zimbabwe sought further Agency support for the enhancement of water resource management and development capacity through the application of isotope hydrology to assess groundwater aquifers in Matabeleland, which would help assure the region's water supply. Continued support was also needed in setting up an NDT training and certification centre to improve the quality of services and products.

121. The Agency was helping Zimbabwe accelerate the process of upgrading its national radiation protection infrastructure so that it complied with the Basic Safety Standards, placing special emphasis on occupational exposure control (milestone 2) and medical exposure control (milestone 3).

122. It was also providing assistance through a regional project on the control and eradication of major diseases affecting livestock within the Southern African Development Community.

123. His country welcomed the Agency's proposed area-wide integrated pest management strategy, which had an SIT component to eradicate tsetse flies in the Kwando/Zambezi region. Its early implementation would be appreciated.

124. With the help of the WHO, the Agency and other development partners, his Government had introduced measures to alleviate the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Sustained use of nuclear applications could have a positive effect on both medical care and industrial performance.

125. Agriculture was the mainstay of Zimbabwe's economy and he commended the Agency for its timely efforts to improve crop varieties, promote nuclear insect control techniques and enhance soil nutrition in his country.

126. Zimbabwe was committed to introducing a legal framework for peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Its Radiation Protection Board would be in place by 30 October. Radiation protection regulations drafted in line with the requirements of the Basic Safety Standards were awaiting approval by the Radiation Protection Board.

127. Zimbabwe was grateful to the Agency for its specialist training courses, workshops and seminars. Many of its national experts underwent regular Agency training. His country sought the Agency's support in further addressing shortages in skilled personnel in the nuclear medicine and radiotherapy fields.

128. His country was highly appreciative of the Agency's initiatives in the area of nuclear medicine. The expert visit by Professor Ajit Kumar Padhy had led to the establishment of a national advisory group on nuclear medicine.

129. He commended the Agency for the various AFRA projects that Zimbabwe was benefiting from, including projects on the maintenance of medical and scientific instruments, strengthening of waste management infrastructure, development of improved crop varieties, improvement of radiotherapy, tumour markers and non-destructive testing. He urged the Agency to ensure that funding for such projects was sufficient, predictable and assured.

130. Electricity generation had become a major impediment to Africa's development. His Government called on the Agency to continue to provide technical advice to Member States so that they could explore alternative energy sources, including nuclear power.

131. Despite the economic challenges that it was current facing, Zimbabwe was committed to fulfilling its obligations to the Agency.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.