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Record of the Sixth Meeting

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President: Mr. MINTY (South Africa)
Later: Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation)
Mr. WOOD (Canada)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(50)/INF/8/Rev.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
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
BSS	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
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INSServ	International Nuclear Security Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
IT	information technology
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPCs	national participation costs
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NUSSC	Nuclear Safety Standards Committee
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
R&D	research and development
RaSSIA	Radiation Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources Infrastructure Appraisal
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SIR	Safeguards Implementation Report
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
SSAC	State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
Wassenaar Arrangement	Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies
WHO	World Health Organization

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2005 (continued)
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1. Mr. ZILMER-JOHNS (Denmark) congratulated the Agency and the Director General on having been awarded the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. Over the previous fifty years, the Agency had proven itself a competent and devoted player in the common efforts to pursue nuclear non-proliferation. Without the NPT and the Agency's safeguards system the world would be far less secure.

2. The Agency's work with respect to safeguards, security and safety had become even more crucial. If insufficiently protected, high-risk nuclear and other radioactive materials could pose a threat to the international community, not least considering the risk of such materials falling into the hands of terrorists. Denmark was pleased that the EU, as the largest donor to the Agency over the year in the field of nuclear security and verification, had recently approved a new Joint Action (2006/418/CFSP) to support the Agency's efforts.

3. Denmark took the position that nuclear power was not a sustainable form of energy and should not be included in national energy planning. While respecting the opinion and choice of others and acknowledging the role of the Agency as stipulated in the Statute, his country was not in favour of a promotional role for the Agency in that field.

4. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Although Denmark had been disappointed at the lack of agreement on a consensus document at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, it was committed to contributing to a positive outcome in the forthcoming review cycle. It was vital to strengthen the non-proliferation component of the NPT regime; to that end prompt and appropriate action must be taken if States were found to be in breach of the NPT or of their safeguards commitments, or were seeking to break out of the regime. The Security Council had a key responsibility in that regard and Denmark fully supported the adoption of Security Council resolution 1695 (2006) concerning the DPRK.

5. His country strongly encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with the relevant Agency and Security Council resolutions, ensuring full cooperation with the Agency and suspension of all enrichment related activities. He hoped that Iran would create the conditions for a resumption of negotiations on the basis of the generous package proposal it had received in June. It was a cause for concern that after more than three years of examination, the Agency remained unable to make further progress in its efforts to verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations with a view to confirming the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. It was also alarming that the Agency had found a document in Iran on the production of uranium metal hemispheres, a process related to the fabrication of nuclear weapon components.

6. The Agency's safeguards regime remained the fundamental instrument for ensuring non-proliferation. Comprehensive safeguards and effective verification were prerequisites for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Accordingly, Denmark encouraged all non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT to conclude and implement an additional protocol without delay.

7. Denmark welcomed the Agency's efforts to address multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, the subject of the Special Event at the Conference. From a non-proliferation perspective, Denmark would consider supporting reliable, last-resort access to enriched uranium, which could significantly lower the risk of nuclear proliferation by reducing the number of countries striving to

master sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle. Also, Denmark supported the Norwegian initiative seeking to minimize the use of HEU and facilitate conversion to LEU. Denmark, for its part, had converted the fuel elements in its former research reactors to LEU in 1990.

8. Mr. ALI (Bangladesh) said that the world was now witnessing a dramatic change. Many countries had major economic development programmes and they would need increasing supplies of energy to fuel high rates of growth. The growing scarcity of energy sources and price fluctuations had wreaked havoc with the development programmes of the poorest nations. Countries which used fossil fuels excessively should give greater attention to conservation and sustainability. The populations in the developing world should be given the opportunity to reap the benefits of science and technology; developing countries had just as much right to nuclear power as others.

9. Bangladesh had signed the NPT, an Agency safeguards agreement, an additional protocol and also the CTBT, and had voluntarily forsworn the nuclear weapons option. Nuclear-weapon States should show an equal commitment to the elimination of their arsenals. Bangladesh had expected that countries which had renounced the nuclear weapons option would be given negative security assurances. The failure to arrive at a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference in 2005 had been a great disappointment. Lack of progress on fissile material control also gave cause for concern. Many now questioned whether the nuclear-weapon States really intended to help rid the world of nuclear weapons.

10. Notwithstanding limited resources, Bangladesh continued to support a nuclear programme that spanned many sectors: health-care services, elemental analysis, in-house maintenance of electronic equipment, environmental monitoring and health physics services, the application of non-destructive testing techniques in industry, food preservation and sterilization of medical supplies, environmental pollution, investigation of pesticide residues, processing of bio-materials for use in the health sector and the application of the SIT for effective pest control.

11. Bangladesh provided nuclear medicine services to more that 170 000 patients annually at 14 nuclear medicine outlets around the country, and the demand was growing. It was also diversifying its health-care services based on nuclear techniques to respond to increasing needs. With government funding, a project had been started to conduct investigations of congenital hypothyroidism and establish a PET-CT (positron emission and computer tomography) centre. The role of nuclear technologies in the health services had taken firm root and enjoyed wide public acceptance.

12. Bangladesh produced radioisotopes such as iodine-131 and technetium-99m for use in nuclear medicine and hoped to attain self-sufficiency in that area soon. Efforts were under way to make greater use of the country's research reactor by diversifying applications of neutron beams. Experts had recently begun to employ neutron activation analysis techniques to evaluate samples of solid, liquid and bio-matrix forms. That had been particularly valuable for accurately quantifying arsenic in hair and nails, providing more deterministic information on arsenic contamination.

13. Bangladesh expected to start construction of a nuclear training institute in 2006. At the appropriate time, it would request the Agency's assistance in developing its facilities. The country's radioactive waste management facility had been set up with Agency support, and his delegation looked forward to the continuation of Agency assistance to enhance its effectiveness.

14. Bangladesh was facing acute problems caused by contamination of groundwater with arsenic. As a result, it was finding it difficult to ensure access to clean drinking water for all. Isotope hydrology techniques were being used to assess underground aquifers so as to identify which ones were safe. A combination of conventional and nuclear techniques was employed to investigate groundwater resources.

15. Ensuring nuclear safety and radiation control was an important part of the country's nuclear programme. Reasonably good progress had been made in meeting the Agency's milestones. An intensive training programme took into account the needs of users and regulators. To make the regulatory functions more effective, it was hoped that a separate regulatory authority could be set up in the near future.

16. Bangladesh was actively involved in RCA projects, including collaborative research programmes, and felt that RCA activities should be strengthened. Programmes involving the application of nuclear techniques in industrial, medical, agricultural and other sectors of the economy were expected to enhance the capabilities of the RCA countries. The scope of the project on energy and nuclear power should be broadened to enable the RCA countries to meet the challenges of their energy development programmes.

17. Funding for the Agency's important safeguards programme should not be detrimental to the Agency's principal objective of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A rationalization of fund allocation would encourage many countries to pursue the path of non-proliferation. There must be a proper balance among Agency programmes.

18. In conclusion, his delegation stressed the Agency's role in the area of climate change, in particular with regard to the Clean Development Mechanism.

19. Mr. FRANK (Israel) said that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005 was a timely recognition of the importance of the Agency's mission and the role of the Director General in promoting global nuclear cooperation, stability and non-proliferation. The "incalculable importance" of the Agency's role, as noted by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, was further underscored by current world challenges. Nuclear power must be made safe, reliable and proliferation-resistant in order to meet the global demand for a non-polluting energy source.

20. The accomplishments of the Agency in its fifty years of existence were substantial. Among its many achievements was its emergence as the focal point for international cooperation in nuclear energy. However, the current challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime were as grave as ever and promised to make the task of the Agency in the coming decades no less challenging and its success in meeting them just as critical. The Agency, as the sole legitimate international nuclear fact-finder, had a unique role in encouraging compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations. That was aided by its capacity to deter violations based on its capabilities to detect non-compliance, to report any non-compliance in a full and timely manner and to facilitate efforts to resolve such concerns. Unfortunately, certain States, some of them in the Middle East, had abused their international treaty obligations, and some instances of non-compliance had not yet been confronted with the proper enforcement of corrective measures. The Agency could not do more than the collective resolve of its Member States to take non-proliferation and nuclear security seriously. The possession of advanced nuclear technology was increasingly being recognized as bringing with it a heavy burden of responsibility as well as accountability to international norms. Israel had a special responsibility to tread in that domain with caution, exercising maximum self-restraint even in the face of grave challenges. Unfortunately, highly destructive forces which engaged in terror and nuclear proliferation had emerged in the already troubled Middle East and threatened to spread instability even further. Regrettably, region-wide progress towards reconciliation and disarmament remained slow.

21. His country had tried to improve national and regional security through a combination of unilateral measures aimed at diminishing friction with its neighbours and a concerted effort to bring itself closer, wherever possible, to international norms on nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. Also, it had stepped up its efforts to help shape and promote new norms in those domains, hoping that those would, in turn, favourably impact upon the region. An intense effort over

several years had brought Israel into both formal and practical compliance with the NSG Guidelines, in addition to its pre-existing adherence to the Australia Group and MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) Guidelines. That effort had been recognized by NSG members at their recent plenary meeting in Brasilia. Israel continued to work towards expanding its export control system to include the Wassenaar Arrangement. It had complemented that effort with active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative and had also submitted a report on its implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). It had begun ratification of the amended CPPNM as well as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. It was implementing the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Code of Conduct on the Safety of Research Reactors. In cooperation with the United States Department of Energy, it was stepping up security on its international borders to combat the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials. In the context of the NUSSC, Israel was working on the further development of national and global standards for stringent nuclear security measures. One high priority area was the transport, storage and waste management of radioactive sources. Israel actively supported and participated in the work of the CTBTO and looked forward to entry into force of the CTBT. He expressed the hope that some non-proliferation and other benefits would be derived from its existence in the current transient state and urged all States party to the CTBT not to conduct nuclear test explosions in the meantime.

22. While Israel was doing its best to develop and implement nuclear security and non-proliferation measures wherever possible, it was aware that in reality such measures did not address all the acute non-proliferation challenges currently faced by the international community. Notwithstanding its limited size and resources, Israel's vested interest in the success of the non-proliferation regime had led it to search for ways to support the development by others of safe, reliable, proliferation-resistant nuclear power technology, to enhance the efficiency of safeguards measures and technology, and to promote new international norms for fuel cycle facilities. The Special Event at the General Conference focused attention on the need to devise and win support for new norms that assured access to a market-based, reliable, safe and secure energy supply without causing new proliferation concerns. Nuclear fuel lease and take-back arrangements together with international spent fuel storage options should be studied with the highest priority.

23. Against that background, Israel viewed with concern the alarming nuclear and missile proliferation developments in and around the Middle East. If those ominous trends were allowed to develop further, they could gravely undermine regional and eventually global stability and pose an existential challenge to Israel. All the more so, because they were accompanied by sustained efforts by certain leaders in the region to deny the legitimacy of Israel's sovereign existence and to call for its destruction. Israel could not remain indifferent to such developments and hoped that the international community would address them. It hoped that all concerned parties would work together with the Agency, under the appropriate guidance of the Security Council, to diffuse those threats.

24. He noted that the Conference once again had before it an item on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat, which it asked Member States to reject as extraneous to the Agency's Statute and mission.

25. Israel supported the principle of making the Middle East a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. However, such a zone could only emerge once the political and security conditions necessary for its negotiation had ripened. As in preceding years, Israel would only be in a position to support the resolution on the application of safeguards in the Middle East under agenda item 20 if its contents were mutually agreed upon and the resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities was not acted upon. It was willing to do so, despite its grave reservations about the modalities of the resolutions, because establishing a NWFZ was consistent with its vision.

26. Israel appreciated the invaluable assistance the Agency provided to Member States through its technical cooperation programme. In recent years, his country had cooperated with the Agency to extend the benefits of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the areas of health, agriculture, environment and industry, both to new constituencies among its own citizens and to its neighbours, including the Palestinians. Israel reiterated its offer to share those benefits with other States and peoples within and outside its region. One promising project was the construction in Jordan of the SESAME synchrotron for regional use. As a member of that initiative, Israel reiterated its support for the expected memorandum of understanding between SESAME and the Agency. Israel had signed a CPF with the Agency, a milestone agreement reflecting nationwide developments pertaining to a wide range of domains in the peaceful application of nuclear energy. Also, it confirmed that the Israel Atomic Energy Commission remained committed to cooperating with the Agency.

27. Finally, Israel looked forward to measures to strengthen the Agency and help it to fulfil its missions and face the tremendous challenges ahead.

28. Mr. DAINIUS (Lithuania) said that fifty years after the establishment of the Agency, its objectives remained vitally important for the international community. The endeavours of the Agency and its Director General under the three Statutory pillars of verification, safety and technology were widely recognized, as the awarding of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize testified.

29. The Agency and its safeguards system played a central role in the non-proliferation regime. The most important current challenge to that regime was the non-compliance of certain States with their obligations under the NPT. Lithuania strongly supported strengthening the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system and considered that the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol should be accepted as the global standard for verifying compliance with nuclear non-proliferation.

30. Lithuania had been implementing its additional protocol since July 2000. The SIR for 2005 had confirmed once again the absence of diversion of nuclear material and of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Lithuania. Work was now under way to implement the integrated safeguards approach in Lithuania.

31. A month previously, Lithuania had hosted a regional technical meeting on the implementation of the additional protocol for EU Member States. The meeting had not only provided a good opportunity to discuss safeguards implementation in the EU, but had also enabled better understanding of the Agency's policies and practices with regard to the implementation of additional protocols. Lithuania had appreciated the opportunity to host that meeting.

32. Lithuania was strongly committed to the requirements of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and welcomed the extension of the 1540 Committee's mandate by two years. It invited other countries to take the necessary steps to prevent non-State actors from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and to stop the proliferation of those weapons. Lithuania noted the significant progress that had been made by the international community and individual States in the worldwide fight against nuclear terrorism. It supported all measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and attached great importance to the Proliferation Security Initiative. In 2005, the international community had also taken a huge step forward in strengthening global security by amending the CPPNM. Lithuania was in the process of ratifying the amendments, a process which it hoped to complete by the end of 2006. Lithuania was implementing the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. Although they were not legally binding, Lithuania encouraged Member States to act in accordance with them and to notify the Director General of their intention to do so. The early entry into force of the CTBT was of

utmost importance to non-proliferation and disarmament, and Lithuania urged all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify that Treaty without delay and without conditions. It welcomed the new developments as regards a fissile material cut-off treaty and urged the pursuit of early negotiations in that connection.

33. With oil and natural gas prices rising, increasing dependency on the import of primary energy resources, the growing threat of climate change and expanding energy demand, there was a need for reliable, affordable and sustainable energy. To that end, the EU had assigned priority to establishing a single energy market. Regional cooperation among the three Baltic States with that goal in mind had been accelerated by their common dependence on a single primary energy supplier, their need to integrate the Baltic electricity market into the markets of Western Europe and Scandinavia, their common need for electricity generation capacities following the closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania and some older units in Estonia, and implementation of the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.

34. The study on energy supply options and security in the Baltic region that had been prepared in cooperation with the Agency, NATO and the three Baltic States had indicated that new nuclear capacities seemed to be the most feasible option, but that construction of a new nuclear power plant only made financial sense if it received multinational support. Estonia and Latvia supported the idea and the Nordic countries had given positive signals. In September 2005, the Lithuanian parliament had asked the Government to consider the construction of a new nuclear power plant and to draw up a programme for developing nuclear energy in Lithuania.

35. At the start of 2006, the Prime Ministers of the three Baltic States had expressed their intention to investigate the possibility of building a new nuclear plant and creating a common Baltic electricity market. The Baltic energy companies had started to prepare a corresponding feasibility study, the results of which would be finalized by November 2006. The Government of Lithuania had invited the Agency to participate in revising the draft document. The regional approach taken by the Baltic States followed EU energy policy and was fully in line with the innovative concepts already being explored by the Agency. Lithuania encouraged other countries to consider cross-border cooperation in meeting their energy demands and appreciated the Agency's efforts to assist countries in evaluating and meeting their energy needs in the most efficient way.

36. In the field of nuclear safety the Agency played a crucial role in identifying operational strengths, weaknesses and good practices and in sharing those insights through regional and international cooperation. Since 2003, Lithuania had been participating actively in the Agency's nuclear safety activities and in 2006 would host various nuclear safety related international events under regional technical cooperation projects. Also, in line with its obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety and following Agency recommendations, Lithuania was strengthening the capabilities of its nuclear regulatory authority and improving the safety level of its nuclear installations.

37. In compliance with international requirements, Unit 1 of the Ignalina nuclear power plant had been shut down in December 2004 and Unit 2 was to be shut down in 2009. Activities to prepare for decommissioning were under way. Efforts were focusing on the construction of a long-term spent fuel store and solid radioactive waste treatment facilities, and on the engineering of dismantling operations for different parts of the plant. Actual dismantling of Unit 1 was expected to begin in 2008. Lithuania was grateful to the Agency for the full-scope OSART mission to the Ignalina plant in June 2006, which had identified several examples of good practice and provided valuable suggestions and recommendations. Progress in implementing the recommendations would be demonstrated during the follow-up mission in late 2007. Additional measures to ensure and enhance safety levels were anticipated until Unit 2 ceased operation.

38. On other safety related issues, Lithuania supported further development of the Incident Reporting System. With regard to the establishment and strengthening of Lithuania's regulatory infrastructure for the control of radiation sources, recently repatriated orphan sources, exposure to ionizing radiation, radiation emergencies and preparedness for acts of terrorism involving radioactive material, he noted that contributions by the Agency and the international community were essential.

39. As one of the initiators, Lithuania welcomed the new regional project on the practical implementation of the principle of optimization of radiation protection through regional networking. Significant progress has been achieved in implementing quality systems in hospitals in the areas of X-ray diagnostics and computed tomography, and upgrading of quality systems in the field of mammography screening was anticipated soon. Lithuania was actively involved in the experience-sharing process and acted as a channel for countries developing a radiation protection infrastructure. In 2005, its Radiation Protection Centre had hosted training courses for representatives from over 10 countries. Lithuania was willing to participate in more technical cooperation projects with the goal of creating a regional training centre.

40. Concerning radioactive waste management, Lithuania was taking steps to ensure the safe disposal of the waste arising mainly from the operation and decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant. It had requested the Agency to organize a peer review to assess the long-term safety aspects of a disposal facility for short-lived low and intermediate level waste. That review, undertaken in December 2005, had evaluated three proposed sites near the Ignalina plant and had concluded that the work undertaken by the national Radioactive Waste Management Agency was in compliance with international standards and good international practice. Observers from Belarus and Latvia had been invited to participate in the assessment process. The Joint Convention had entered into force in Lithuania on 14 June 2004 and his country had presented its first report during the second review meeting of the Convention. The conclusion had shown that Lithuania was fulfilling its obligations.

41. Lithuania had been participating in the Agency's technical cooperation programme since 2003. Its national goals were to establish and constantly enhance nuclear infrastructure and capabilities, and to strengthen such areas as nuclear safety and security, radiation protection, decommissioning, radioactive waste management, radiotherapy and nuclear medicine. Its future priorities focused on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and technology so as to be prepared for future challenges. Lithuania had six ongoing national technical cooperation projects and planned to sign an updated CPF with more emphasis on decommissioning and radioactive waste management. Lithuania, a strong supporter of the Agency's technical cooperation activities, had contributed its share of the TCF target on time and in full.

42. Mr. RUSHITI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), having congratulated the Secretariat and the Director General on receiving the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, said that his country fully subscribed to the need for a strong international safeguards system to promote collective security. Increasing global terrorism meant that the role of the Agency was becoming even more important. Enhanced cooperation among Member States and the Agency on the application of safety standards and of the measures foreseen under the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009 was therefore essential.

43. His country had a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force, had signed an additional protocol and had joined the CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which were crucial instruments in international efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and the physical protection of nuclear material and facilities. He urged all Member States which had not done so to follow suit.

44. With the Agency's indispensable assistance, his country had made significant progress towards compliance with international radiation safety standards. Further assistance based on the

recommendations of the RaSSIA mission would be required to make its Radiation Safety Directorate fully operational and to build the planned comprehensive radiation protection and national nuclear safety framework.

45. His country's most significant achievements under the Agency's technical cooperation programme had been: the development of legislation, including the establishment of an independent regulatory authority; improved dosimetry services and the establishment of a national calibration laboratory; improved nuclear medicine diagnostic procedures and the introduction of locally produced radiopharmaceuticals; upgrading of the radiotherapy services at the Institute of Radiotherapy and Oncology to the level of a centre of excellence; and, the establishment of food safety laboratories. During the coming project cycle, efforts would focus primarily on further strengthening of the regulatory infrastructure and the capabilities of the radiation protection services, and upgrading of diagnostic procedures in nuclear medicine and radiotherapy. Particular attention would be given to completing the disposal facility for low and intermediate level radioactive waste. All projects had been defined jointly with the Agency in compliance with the Republic of Macedonia's CPF. The current implementation rate for national projects, 92%, was encouragingly high. The Republic of Macedonia would continue to give its full support to the Agency's activities for the enhancement of regional cooperation. As an active participant in and beneficiary of the regional programme, it would continue to offer to host training events.

46. Aware of the importance of financial contributions to the technical cooperation programme, his country had paid its share of the TCF target in full and also its NPCs, despite national budgetary restrictions. Its commitment to the programme was evidenced by its providing cost-sharing for each project. The Republic of Macedonia was grateful for Agency technical cooperation and pledged its continued support for all the Agency's activities in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation), Vice-President, took the Chair.

47. Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka) said the Agency's 50th anniversary was an appropriate occasion on which to take stock of its achievements and look towards the new directions to be taken in the future. As a developing Member State, Sri Lanka attached great importance to the Agency's ongoing work relating to the promotion of peaceful applications of nuclear technology for sustainable socio-economic development. The Annual Report for 2005 reflected the progress made in nuclear technology applications in agriculture, industry, health, water management, preservation of the environment and human resource development. In view of the specific challenges faced by Sri Lanka relating to human nutrition and cancer, his delegation welcomed the creation of the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund and PACT.

48. Energy availability was central to improving the standards of living in developing countries and energy security was one of the important challenges to development. The Agency faced a number of critical issues related to rising nuclear energy expectations worldwide, both in developed and developing countries. In his introductory statement, the Director General had outlined thought-provoking ideas for the future in that connection.

49. The Agency was continuing to carry out important work in the areas of nuclear safety and security. In the present global context of protecting nuclear installations and transport from terrorist and other illegal activities, the Agency had an enhanced role to play. Sri Lanka remained concerned about the threat of nuclear terrorism and supported the Agency's NSF, which required flexibility in the utilization of its resources. The newly established Incident and Emergency Centre was also a welcome measure, as it enhanced the capabilities of Member States and intergovernmental organizations to respond to nuclear or radiological incidents and emergencies by offering timely and efficient services.

50. Sri Lanka had been privileged to serve on the Board of Governors for the preceding two years and had made an active contribution. The Working Group on Technical Cooperation Fund Targets and Indicative Planning Figures, chaired jointly by the Ambassadors of Sri Lanka and Norway, had arrived at a consensus outcome. Technical cooperation was a statutory function of the Agency, fulfilling Article II of its Statute and Article IV of the NPT, and as such should receive the same budgetary resources as the other pillars of its mandate. Also, funding for technical cooperation activities should be sufficient, predictable and assured and reflect, in financial terms, the political consensus among Member States relating to the Agency's mandate.

51. The Sri Lankan Government had paid its NPCs the preceding year and was committed to paying its total NPCs for the 2007–2008 biennium.

52. Like other developing Member States, Sri Lanka had benefited significantly from the Agency's technical cooperation programme by acquiring nuclear technology capabilities in the fields of health, agriculture and industry. The Agency's technical cooperation strategy, which was implemented in accordance with its central criteria, had enabled nuclear technology to have a high impact on socio-economic development in Sri Lanka and projects were helping to improve the radiotherapy services in cancer hospitals, diagnosis of major infectious diseases through the use of molecular diagnostic techniques, assessment of pesticide contamination of surface water and groundwater, livestock productivity, the safety of livestock products, and the safety and sustainability of dams.

53. In the field of health, an imPACT mission had visited Sri Lanka earlier in the year, and the country was pleased to be able to contribute to the Agency's collaborative efforts to develop model demonstration sites for cancer control. He hoped that PACT's commendable objectives would generate adequate resources for that programme. At the national level, his Government had taken positive steps to curb the incidence of cancer through legislation and related measures to discourage smoking and mitigate the effects of other causative factors.

54. Sri Lanka appreciated the Agency's initiative to implement the new web-based Programme Cycle Management Framework. It had received wide acceptance among the prospective project counterparts and project management staff in Sri Lanka and could only enhance the provision of technical cooperation in Member States.

55. The Agency's continuing efforts to improve the self-reliance and sustainability of national nuclear institutes through regional technical cooperation were in full accordance with the policies of Sri Lanka's Atomic Energy Authority, which acted as the focal point for Agency programmes. The Authority had been able to generate two-thirds of its operational expenses during 2005 through the provision of analytical and radiation protection services, training and other activities.

56. Sri Lanka noted with appreciation the efforts being made by the Agency in the field of knowledge management and preservation of nuclear knowledge. The increasing availability of information and communication technology provided an ideal platform for launching knowledge management and preservation projects.

57. Sri Lanka, which had become party to the RCA in 1976, had been an active participant in its programmes. The Agency had provided crucial technical support to initiate the programmes, and his Government had provided collateral support to make them sustainable. Sri Lanka strongly supported the Agency's approach of fostering regional cooperation and subscribed to the view that regional cooperative agreements were effective mechanisms through which to address a range of transboundary issues, including those related to safety and security. The Sri Lankan Government had started to address some of those issues, in particular the security of nuclear material, through bilateral approaches.

58. On the initiative of the Minister of Science and Technology, his Government had allocated funds for the establishment of the first government-owned, multi-purpose gamma irradiation facility. The Agency had contributed to the success of the project through assistance in the form of expert services during the planning stages and further collaboration was anticipated in the development of manpower and technology transfer.

59. Mr. RÓNAKY (Hungary) said that the 50th General Conference provided a good opportunity to review the past and plan for the future. The Agency, known for its unbiased analysis on nuclear matters and its important contribution to socio-economic development worldwide, had received well deserved recognition of its achievements by being awarded the Nobel Peace Price for 2005. The Director General's official visit to Hungary in October 2005 had provided an opportunity for his country to demonstrate both its strong support for the Agency's values and its commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

60. The increasing threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists, was a matter of great concern. Hungary attached the utmost importance to full implementation of the provisions of the NPT and effective measures in cases of non-compliance and strongly supported strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system. It welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute and urged Member States to adopt practical verification measures with a view to making the safeguards mechanism more credible and effective. Hungary had contributed to efforts in that direction through early ratification of the additional protocol and had been among the first States with significant nuclear industries to introduce integrated safeguards in 2004. As a voluntary contribution, the Hungarian Support Programme continued to facilitate the implementation of Agency safeguards projects by providing expertise and training courses, practical training for Agency inspectors and for Member States requiring further education.

61. Hungary had supported the Agency's work in taking tangible measures to assist Member States in enhancing nuclear security by making a voluntary contribution of US $70 000. It commended the Agency for supporting Member States in reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism and proliferation through the conversion of research reactors from HEU to LEU, and the return of the HEU to the country of origin. Such projects were being implemented in Hungary and other countries in the region. Furthermore, Hungary was ready to contribute to regional security by cooperating with the Agency and regional partners and by considering appropriate in-kind contributions.

62. His country welcomed efforts to address the proliferation-sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle and similarly the Special Event on assurances of supply and non-proliferation at the current General Conference. Hungary was interested in participating in the discussions on the various initiatives, including the concept for a multilateral mechanism for reliable access to nuclear fuel proposed at the June 2006 Board meeting. Hungary encouraged all parties to contribute actively to achieving further progress on that pivotal issue.

63. To keep pace with technological progress, the output of the Paks nuclear power plant in Hungary would be upgraded to over 2000 MW by 2009. There was broad consensus in his country that the security of its energy supply could not be maintained without nuclear energy. That had been reflected by a parliamentary decision in November 2005 to provide political support for the lifetime extension of the Paks plant. The Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority and the plant's operator had reached an agreement on the schedule for that extension. With the assistance of the Agency, Hungary would implement projects to support that process and to ensure that the appropriate measures and decisions were duly taken. An important stage had been reached in preparations to eliminate the consequences of the serious incident at the plant in 2003. All the necessary licences had been obtained and the conditions met to start removal of the damaged fuel, which would begin in the last quarter

of 2006. In that regard, both the plant operator and the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority had benefited from expert missions and scientific visits facilitated by the Agency.

64. His Parliament had, in November 2005, approved in principle the establishment of a repository for low and intermediate level waste from the Paks plant. Its approval had been based on internationally recognized research proving the geological suitability of the selected area, favourable evaluation of the competent geological institutions and, last but not least, the support of the local population. Work on establishing the necessary infrastructure and developing the plans required to start construction was under way.

65. The second review meeting of the Joint Convention had demonstrated the significant progress made since the first review meeting. Contracting Parties were committed to improving their policies and practices and the objectives of the Joint Convention were well served by the maturing review process. Although membership had increased significantly, even further efforts in that direction could be made.

66. Non-power applications, including health, were key components of the Agency's activities. Hungary welcomed the launch of PACT as a positive example of how the Agency should respond to the needs of Member States. His Government had made a voluntary contribution of €40 000 in November 2005 and had proposed that the Hungarian National Oncology Institute participate in the programme. He expressed satisfaction that the recent QUATRO (Quality Assurance Team for Radiation Oncology) audit had concluded that the processes and techniques at the Institute were state of the art.

67. His country attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Hungary had been among those Member States requesting changes in its operation, an opinion that had been echoed by the External Auditor in 2005. A shift of emphasis from national to regional programmes in Europe would be beneficial. The loss of focus his delegation perceived in the Department of Technical Cooperation was attributable to the long duration of the reorganization process. Improved performance and efficiency in technical cooperation, one of the cornerstones of the success of the Agency, were important. Hungary welcomed the agreement reached on the TCF target for the 2007–2008 biennium and had pledged its voluntary contribution. It called on all Member States to pay their TCF and Regular Budget contributions in full and on time.

68. Mr. ALOBIDI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Agency's technical cooperation programme was of great importance because of its direct contribution to economic and social development. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was very grateful for the assistance it had received in recent years, especially in the priority areas of health and water resource management. For its part, Libya had hosted a number of activities under national and regional projects, including a national workshop on radiation protection infrastructure in March 2006 attended by 48 participants; a coordination meeting in July 2006 attended by representatives of UNDP, UNEP and the Agency on a unified management programme for the Nubian sandstone aquifer system shared by Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Chad; a workshop in July 2006 on a national multi-function simulation project sponsored by the Agency in cooperation with the Renewable Energy and Water Desalination Centre in Tajoura; and a workshop in July and August 2006 under its project on sustainable energy and power planning study.

69. Libya attached great importance to the Agency's work in the areas of nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste disposal. It had reorganized its Radiation and Nuclear Safety Monitoring Bureau, which was now a General Environment Authority responsible for radiation monitoring, while the National Research and Development Bureau was now responsible for nuclear safety.

70. Libya participated in all Agency training courses, workshops and meetings on nuclear security and was a party to the CPPNM. It would host a workshop for Arab countries in November/December 2006 sponsored by the Agency in cooperation with the Renewable Energy and Water Desalination Centre on the physical protection of research reactors.

71. His country had made its position on weapons of mass destruction clear on many occasions at meetings of the General Assembly, the Agency and the Disarmament Committee. It was also a party to many instruments aimed at freeing the world of such weapons. In keeping with the goals of the NPT, Libya's Great Green Document on Human Rights in the Age of the Masses promulgated in 1989 prohibited the production of weapons of mass destruction and called on all countries to eliminate them, while retaining the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to engage in research. Libya condemned unilateral measures aimed at restricting that right.

72. The Jamahiriya was currently implementing the following projects: prospecting for radioactive material, mapping the whole country and deriving economic benefits from the results; building plants for the treatment, purification, concentration and mining of ore; using the Tajoura reactor to produce radioactive isotopes for use in medicine, agriculture and industry; and contracting for the building of a nuclear reactor for desalination and power generation.

73. Libya was concerned that countries outside the NPT regime continued to develop military nuclear capabilities with the assistance of major powers and had built up an arsenal of nuclear weapons. There was a dangerous security imbalance in the Middle East that threatened international peace and security because one country possessed nuclear weapons. His country called for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the region and for Israel to place its nuclear facilities under international safeguards in keeping with the NPT. The concern of all countries in the region was reflected in General Assembly resolutions dating back to 1974 and in Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which urged the countries of the Middle East to consider taking practical steps to establish a NWFZ, to accede to the NPT and to place their nuclear installations and activities under Agency safeguards.

74. Libya welcomed the Agency's efforts to increase the representation of developing countries on its staff but noted that little progress had been made to date despite the considerable expertise that was now available in those countries. In particular, he called for better representation of developing countries, including his own, in high-level posts.

75. Threats and intimidation were of no help in reaching a settlement to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme that satisfied all parties. Moreover, sanctions did not succeed in compelling countries to renounce their sovereignty and hurt ordinary people more than decision-makers. The use of force in relations between peoples was destructive and assisted extremists in recruiting supporters for their cause, as evidenced in Iraq and Afghanistan. Libya reaffirmed Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and urged it to cooperate with the Agency and respond to all its demands as soon as possible in order to dispel any doubts about its nuclear programme. Negotiations were the only appropriate way of dealing with the issue.

76. It was now more urgent than ever to promote universal ratification of the NPT and universalization of the safeguards regime, including the additional protocol. Libya had ratified its own additional protocol on 11 July 2006. Libya called on nuclear-weapon States to draw up a programme for the elimination of their arsenals and to halt all activities involving such weapons. Otherwise the NPT would be meaningless. Libya had decided to suspend its programmes and destroy all materials that could be used to produce internationally prohibited weapons on 19 December 2003. He urged Member States, especially the G8, to reward Libya by providing it with direct assistance so that it

became a model of what could be achieved through the voluntary abandonment of weapons of mass destruction.

77. Mr. ENKHTUVSHIN (Mongolia) expressed his Government's support for the Agency's goals, principles and programmes, including combating nuclear terrorism. To that end, it had ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in July 2006.

78. Consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime was vital to the maintenance of international peace and security. The signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was an important step in that direction. That Treaty, together with Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, would contribute to strengthening trust and stability in Central Asia and beyond. Mongolia was pursuing its efforts to institutionalize its nuclear-weapon-free status at international level. The growing international recognition and support for that status had been expressed in both bilateral and multilateral international instruments, such as the joint statement between Mongolia and the People's Republic of China of 29 November 2005, the joint statement between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea on 9 May 2006 and the final document of the recent 14th Summit of the NAM. A progress report by a recently established interministerial working group on the implementation of the Mongolian law on its nuclear-weapon-free status had found that the article prohibiting the transportation of nuclear weapons, parts or components thereof or any other nuclear material designed or produced for weapons purposes through the territory of Mongolia had been difficult to implement owing to a shortage of trained personnel and relevant equipment. The report had made concrete recommendations on cooperation to be pursued with the international community in order to overcome those difficulties. Mongolia hoped to collaborate with the Agency and its Member States to enhance its capacity to control and account for nuclear material, physically protect nuclear material and nuclear facilities, and to prevent, detect and interdict the theft, illicit possession of and illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

79. Since 1975, Mongolia had been a recipient of Agency technical cooperation assistance in areas such as agriculture, health care, geology, mining, energy, the environment, education and science applications, and the strengthening of nuclear and radiation protection. In addition, many Mongolian specialists had participated in Agency-sponsored fellowship programmes, and several laboratories had been established to serve the needs of a wide range of government authorities, scientific institutes and universities. Projects being implemented within the framework of the Agency's technical cooperation programme for 2005–2006 included one to install a cobalt teletherapy machine at the State Oncology Research Centre, which had a great impact on the country's health-care system. Under another project on integrated energy demand and supply planning through 2025, Mongolian experts were acquiring the capacity for energy planning and could now assess energy demand and supply in greater detail. Mongolia had improved its radiation protection and waste safety infrastructure thanks to assistance it had received in the framework of the Agency's Model Project on that topic. To determine the objectives and scope of its future cooperation, Mongolia was interested in discussing and modifying its CPF.

80. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that cooperation between Mongolia and the Agency would expand to encompass other areas of mutual interest.

81. Mr. DUCA (Republic of Moldova) said that humanity was facing an era of rapid scientific and technological development and the need for energy sustainability and new technologies was becoming increasingly pressing. More and more countries had begun to review the role of nuclear technologies in their economic development, and the Agency had the important task of promoting the peaceful use of such technologies.

82. Moldova was making an effort to develop its legislative framework to bring it in line with EU standards. Its commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology was shown by the new national law concerning the safe implementation of nuclear activities and those involving ionizing radiation sources.

83. All countries going through the transition to a market economy, including Moldova, were coping with economic decline or stagnation. Moldova had scarce energy resources and imported nearly all its energy from Ukraine and Russia. Prices were constantly rising and that further weakened its economy. The Moldovan Government was considering renewable and nuclear power as alternative energy sources and hoped for Agency technical assistance in that regard.

84. Another source of concern in Moldova was possible illicit trafficking of radioactive sources through the territory of Transnistria, which was not under the control of the Government.

85. During the 49th General Conference, Moldova had signed a new CPF, identifying its priority areas for cooperation as nuclear equipment in human health, radiation processing, radiation safety, emergency preparedness and radioactive waste management. Under Agency cooperation projects, his country had received approximately $3 million in assistance. Moldova had submitted three national projects for the next biennium on the use of linear accelerator technology in cancer treatment, the establishment of new industrial sectors based on radiation processing technology, and upgrading radiation monitoring capabilities.

86. Moldova was grateful to the Agency and the United States of America for their support in the field of the safety of radioactive sources. The country's storage of sources now met international standards. Additional assistance from donor countries for the national project on the establishment of an industrial radiation processing centre would be most appreciated as that project would have a considerable impact on such branches of the economy as pharmaceuticals, medicine, food and science.

87. Aware of the importance of nuclear security, Moldova would pursue further cooperation with the Department of Safeguards in order to comply with international norms and practices. In that context, his Government had officially expressed to the Agency its preparedness to sign an additional protocol.

88. In its fifty years of existence, the Agency had played an indispensable role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and had become one of the most dynamic international organizations. He reiterated his Government's support for the Agency's future activities.

89. Mr. MACGREGOR (United Kingdom) underlined the importance of the Agency's task of preventing proliferation and nuclear terrorism. The SIR for 2005 recorded another year of valuable work in the crucial area of verification. The steady increase in the number of States with comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols in force was encouraging. Also gratifying was the number of States for which the Secretariat had been able to conclude that all nuclear material was being used for peaceful purposes. That should become the norm for the international safeguards regime and he urged all Member States that had not already done so rapidly to agree and bring into force an additional protocol.

90. His country wished to see the safeguards system strengthened and was actively participating in the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute to that end.

91. The United Kingdom commended the Director General and the Secretariat for their continuing efforts to seek clarifications from the Islamic Republic of Iran and to verify the status of its nuclear programme. It was seriously concerned by the Director General's assessment that, after nearly four

years of intense inspections, the Agency remained unable to make further progress in its efforts to verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations with a view to confirming the exclusively peaceful nature of that country's nuclear programme.

92. His country fully supported Security Council resolution 1696 (2006) which, inter alia, made it mandatory for Iran to suspend all enrichment related and reprocessing activities, including research and development. It also expressed the intention to adopt appropriate measures under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter if Iran did not comply, and called on Iran to act in accordance with the additional protocol and to implement all transparency measures the Agency might request in support of its ongoing investigations. The United Kingdom remained concerned by Iran's continued failure to meet the frequently-stated requests of the Board of Governors and the requirements of the Security Council. It welcomed the recent meetings between EU High Representative, Javier Solana, and the Iranian chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, but regretted that Iran had not yet taken the steps that would allow negotiations to resume on the basis of the proposals made by six Member States.

93. The United Kingdom remained deeply concerned that the nuclear activities of the DPRK had been outside Agency verification since December 2002. It continued to urge the DPRK to comply with all its international commitments fully, unconditionally and without delay, particularly with its comprehensive safeguards agreement under the NPT. He reiterated his country's strong call urging the DPRK to abandon and completely dismantle any nuclear weapons related programme in a prompt, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. The United Kingdom supported Security Council resolution 1695 (2006), which strongly urged the DPRK to return immediately to the six-party talks without preconditions and implement the joint statement concluded in September 2005. The United Kingdom sought a peaceful and negotiated settlement to the North Korean nuclear issue.

94. His country continued to support the Agency's nuclear security work to combat potential threats from international nuclear terrorists. Much had already been achieved under the Nuclear Security Plan of Activities and the comprehensive plan for 2006–2009 to increase awareness and assist States in improving their arrangements for preventing, detecting and responding to terrorist and other malicious acts. In the preceding year, the United Kingdom had donated approximately $900 000 to the NSF, bringing its total contribution to around $3.6 million. He urged other Member States to contribute also.

95. The United Kingdom had introduced national legislation based on the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources which would come into force from 2 October 2006.

96. He thanked the Secretariat for the valuable IRRS mission to the United Kingdom in March 2006. Its report should enhance public confidence in the United Kingdom's nuclear regulatory system and in its health and safety effectiveness. The mission had shown that the IRRS could be deployed in countries with major nuclear programmes and confirmed the effectiveness of the modular approach in reviewing practices in such countries. The United Kingdom would welcome further missions over the coming years to complete a more comprehensive review of its system for regulating nuclear, radiation and radioactive waste management safety.

97. As a major contributor to the TCF, the United Kingdom believed that technical cooperation activities were a crucial element of the Agency's work and played a major role in increasing the Agency's profile around the world and in furthering the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The negotiations on the TCF target for 2007–2008 and an indicative planning figure for 2009-2011 had concluded successfully. However, the agreed increase in the TCF was higher than it should be to compensate for the fact that a large number of Member States were not meeting their obligations in full, which was not a responsible basis for budgetary planning.

98. On 11 July 2006, his Government had published the conclusions of its energy review. It recognized that nuclear power might have a role to play in the country's future energy mix, both as a source of low carbon generation and in diversifying energy supplies, and it also recognized that any new nuclear power stations would need to be proposed, developed, constructed and operated by the private sector, which would also meet their full decommissioning and long-term waste management costs. The Government proposed to examine ways to improve the processes for the licensing and planning of new reactors, and to clarify how the costs of decommissioning and waste management would be met. Its proposals were expected to appear early in 2007.

99. The United Kingdom fully supported the proposition that a reliable nuclear fuel supply mechanism would foster international cooperation in promoting the safe and reliable peaceful use of nuclear energy while contributing to non-proliferation. States had to decide whether or not to participate, balancing the value of the assurance against the huge cost and technological challenge of developing their own enrichment capabilities. The United Kingdom had been pleased to co-sponsor the concept for a multilateral mechanism for reliable access to nuclear fuel at the June 2006 Board of Governors. Since then, it had been considering how that assurance could work in practice and was participating in the Special Event of the General Conference. It welcomed the lively and open debate it was generating. It was open to working with interested States and the Secretariat to develop further the necessary commercial, non-proliferation, export and legal conditions to ensure the initiative's success.

100. It was vital that the Agency was efficient, well-managed and forward-looking. Over the preceding few years, the United Kingdom had actively supported the Secretariat's work to identify internal efficiencies and to manage change. It was pleased with the progress to date and had donated a further $85 000 in 2006 to fund a management training programme for the Agency.

101. Ms. MACMILLAN (New Zealand) said that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were key elements of her country's foreign policy. Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons through the implementation of safeguards under the NPT was a fundamental pillar of the Agency's work and New Zealand offered its continued support in achieving that objective. It looked forward to working constructively with all Member States in the next review cycle of the NPT for the strongest possible outcome on nuclear disarmament.

102. One of the Agency's key roles was to verify and assure Member States that nuclear material was not being diverted from peaceful uses. In order to fulfil that mandate, the Director General required the correct tools, including the additional protocol. New Zealand believed that the additional protocol was the contemporary verification standard and should be a condition of nuclear supply. It urged States that had not yet done so, to conclude additional protocols with the Agency without delay.

103. New Zealand was supportive of the decision to modify the SQP in order to address weaknesses in the current safeguards system and welcomed the Agency's offer to assist small States in the implementation of that decision.

104. The threat of nuclear terrorism and other malicious acts involving nuclear material remained real, transnational and multifaceted. New Zealand welcomed the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009 and assured the Agency of its continued support for the NSF.

105. As regards nuclear safety, New Zealand was committed to the principles and objectives of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

106. New Zealand continued to be concerned by the Agency's inability reach a conclusion regarding the DPRK's nuclear activities following its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003. That country's decision to pursue nuclear weapons posed a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the

stability and security of the Asia-Pacific region. The DPRK's missile tests in July 2006 had further jeopardized the security situation in the region, and New Zealand supported Security Council resolution 1695 condemning that action. At its meeting the previous week, the Board of Governors had emphasized the importance of continued dialogue to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive resolution to the issue. New Zealand fully supported the Board's view that a successfully negotiated settlement of such a longstanding issue would be a significant accomplishment for international peace and security. It therefore called on the DPRK to return to the six-party talks.

107. A further concern was Iran's failure to suspend its enrichment related activities and adhere to the provisions of the additional protocol, in contravention of Board resolutions and Security Council resolution 1696. It therefore supported the Director General's report to the Board and Security Council resolution 1696, calling for Iran to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing programme. New Zealand supported the Agency's efforts to verify the nature of Iran's nuclear programme and called on Iran to provide the Agency with all the access and information it needed to undertake its task. Refraining from further enrichment and reprocessing activities would represent a serious step forward in building international confidence and would meet a key requirement of resolution 1696. New Zealand urged Iran to suspend its programme, and also any related R&D, and take the opportunity offered by the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany to negotiate a solution.

108. The safe transport of radioactive material continued to be of considerable significance to New Zealand since such shipments occasionally passed its shores. It was important to ensure that the highest possible safety and security standards were adhered to, that appropriate information was sent in advance of any transports that might take place through the Pacific, that proper emergency response systems were in operation and that an effective liability and compensation mechanism was in place. New Zealand was pleased with the progress being made in many of those areas and urged all parties to continue to strive for improvements where possible.

109. New Zealand appreciated the valuable role that INLEX had played in examining the application and scope of the Agency's nuclear liability regime. It also welcomed the explanatory commentary developed to clarify the scope and content of the Agency's latest nuclear liability instruments and the outreach workshops being held to explain the nature and content of the international regime. New Zealand continued to attach importance to INLEX's consideration of possible gaps in the regime and ways in which to address any such gaps.

110. Her country welcomed the report on the TranSAS mission to Japan. Given that shipments passing New Zealand were generally travelling between Japan and Europe, Japan's willingness to accept such a mission was especially appreciated. New Zealand welcomed the continued dialogue between coastal and shipping States and looked forward to working towards an understanding of further practice which met the concerns of both sides.

111. As a strong supporter of the NPT, New Zealand upheld the principle of access to nuclear technology for peaceful uses, in particular to the many civilian applications which were not related to nuclear power generation and which could enhance the lives of millions of people worldwide. New Zealand had rejected the use of nuclear power for itself, not believing it to be compatible with the concept of sustainable development, given the long-term financial and ecological costs associated with the disposal of nuclear waste. New Zealand was also concerned about any associated nuclear weapon proliferation risks.

112. The nuclear non-proliferation regime was currently facing an increased challenge. It was imperative that the international community work together to agree and coordinate effective responses to meet that challenge. The Agency played a vital role in that collective response, working with Member States to safeguard and secure nuclear materials for exclusively peaceful purposes.

113. Ms. GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE (Canada) said her country continued in its five-decade tradition of being a major contributor to the Agency's mission. With its highly advanced nuclear sector and the confidence of the Agency's broader safeguards conclusion, Canada stood ready to expand the use of radioisotopes for nuclear medicine, to provide uranium as a reliable source of clean energy and to advance peaceful nuclear power applications throughout the world.

114. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Agency's role in verifying States' compliance with their legally-binding commitments under that Treaty was unique and essential. Recent strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system had enabled the Secretariat to draw broader safeguards conclusions which, in turn, increased confidence in the peaceful nature of a State's nuclear programme. Canada called on all States party to the NPT that had not yet done so to accept that enhanced verification standard by entering into a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. Also, it reiterated its call to countries that had not yet done so, to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place the full scope of their nuclear activities under Agency safeguards. Canada welcomed India's expression of support for international nuclear non-proliferation goals and looked forward to learning more about the implementation of India's national measures to meet such goals, including how a robust safeguards regime might be implemented.

115. Drawing conclusions on the correctness and completeness of a Member State's declarations was a difficult task under the best of circumstances, but in the case of Iran the challenge was much greater. Canada commended the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to resolve questions relating to its nuclear programme. The Director General had already noted that Iran had maintained a policy of concealment for nearly two decades. The Board of Governors and the Security Council had requested additional access and transparency measures beyond those of the additional protocol that Iran had signed, but had yet to ratify. Canada called upon Iran to adhere to the calls of the Board of Governors and the requirements of Security Council resolution 1696. Only then could it bridge the confidence gap created by its past non-compliance and policy of concealment and re-emerge as a State fully prepared to exercise its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

116. Canada's concerns about the significant quantities of unsafeguarded nuclear material in the DPRK had been compounded in February 2005 when the DPRK had declared that it was in the possession of nuclear weapons — a statement that stood in stark contrast to other statements and commitments that the DPRK had made in support of a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. That statement also called into question the purpose of its ballistic missile programme, which was the basis of the deep concern expressed in Security Council resolution 1695. Canada called on all parties, especially the DPRK, to return immediately and without precondition to the six-party talks. Canada hoped that the DPRK would fulfil its commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a transparent and verifiable manner.

117. Her country attached considerable importance to an effective and efficient safeguards system that was responsive to new verification challenges and continued to provide the basis for credible safeguards conclusions. It supported a system that utilized a State-level perspective and was both transparent in its processes and non-discriminatory in its implementation. Canada looked forward to continuing to work with the Agency to strengthen the safeguards system in general, and to implement an effective and efficient State-level integrated safeguards approach in Canada.

118. As regards nuclear safety and security, Canada was very pleased to announce an additional contribution of four million Canadian dollars to the NSF, bringing its total contribution to over eight million Canadian dollars. That was part of the country's continued participation in the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Canada was proud once again to be the second largest donor to the NSF.

119. Her country hoped to continue working in collaboration with the Agency in Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union to implement Canadian-funded activities aimed, in particular, at physical protection upgrades and training, as well as projects to enhance capabilities to prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear substances and projects to recover and secure such substances. Such a large voluntary commitment was a concrete demonstration of Canada's view that the Agency's nuclear security activities were an integral part of global efforts to strengthen nuclear security in order to prevent, detect and respond to acts of nuclear terrorism. Her delegation encouraged other Member States to make contributions also. Canada would like to see more nuclear security activities financed from the Regular Budget to ensure predictable and assured funding of the Nuclear Security Plan's critical activities.

120. Canada's participation in the second review meeting of the Joint Convention affirmed the importance it attached to safe and secure radioactive waste management. Its national report had described how Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization was implementing its long-term plan for waste management. The Organization had published its final study report in November 2005 after extensive public consultations.

121. International standards, in particular the Agency's safety standards, should play an important role in ensuring consistent approaches and common objectives as regards nuclear safety. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), for its part, continued to apply international standards in regulating domestic nuclear activities and encouraged other regulatory bodies to do the same. To improve further its regulatory mechanisms, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization was using the Agency's IRRS.

122. Canada had undertaken to strengthen its regulatory regime in anticipation of the application of the provisions of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. Canada had a sealed source tracking system and a national register of such sources, which allowed stricter control over their use and movement. Strengthened controls on the import and export of high-risk radioactive sources would be fully implemented early in 2007. She called on Member States to continue to work together to ensure the consistent and harmonized implementation of such important standards.

123. Adoption of the Code of Conduct on the Safety of Research Reactors had highlighted the importance of research reactor safety and would contribute to the improvement and harmonization of other international practices in that area. Canada, with its considerable experience in the regulation of research reactors, looked forward to working with the international community in the implementation of the Code of Conduct to improve the safety of research reactors worldwide.

124. The very rapid growth in energy demand expected in the twenty-first century made it difficult to foresee a viable and environmentally-sound strategy that did not include nuclear energy. In the short term, Canada was refurbishing three CANDU reactors, with a decision pending on a fourth and, in August 2006, the CNSC had received a request for siting licence for nuclear reactors.

125. With over fifty years of experience in nuclear technology innovations, Canada was a world leader in promoting nuclear energy as a low-level emissions solution and in adapting that resource to meet future energy needs. Her Government, in association with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, was developing on advanced CANDU reactor with enhanced features in terms of safety, profitability and non-proliferation.

126. Canada remained a strong supporter of Agency technical cooperation activities ranging from insect sterilization to cancer treatment and was a major contributor to the TCF. Her delegation urged the Department of Technical Cooperation to continue its efforts aimed at better prioritization and more efficient and effective management. The excellent Technical Cooperation Report for 2005 had

demonstrated the value of the technical cooperation programme. Canada called on all States to make their voluntary contributions to it on time and, where possible, in full.

127. Mr. PANUPONG (Thailand) said that the 50th anniversary of the Agency provided an opportunity to reflect on past achievements. The credibility of the Agency in fulfilling its mandates had stood the test of time and its high standard of professionalism, integrity and impartiality had been justly rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005. He reaffirmed Thailand's support for the Agency's statutory activities.

128. As a medium-sized developing country, Thailand pursued people-centred development and the attainment of the United nations Millennium Development Goals. Within the framework of the Agency, that translated into a commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear techniques in many areas of socio-economic development. The sharp increase in world oil prices and growing concerns over future energy demands and climate change had led to renewed interest in nuclear power in many countries, including Thailand. It was therefore grateful to the Agency for organizing the International Seminar on Facts of Nuclear Power for Electricity Generation, in Bangkok, from 19 to 22 July 2006, which had helped to raise public awareness of nuclear energy. Thailand hoped to cooperate with the Agency on any follow-up to that Seminar. His delegation also welcomed the General Conference Special Event on assurances of supply and non-proliferation.

129. Agency technical cooperation had benefited Thailand in terms of human resource development, mostly in the form of expert services, fellowships, training courses and scientific visits, and also the procurement of equipment. The main areas of technical cooperation were the application of isotopes and radiation in agriculture, nuclear and radiation safety, nuclear security, nuclear medicine and nuclear engineering and technology.

130. Besides its contribution to the TCF target, which it had pledged in full, and payment of its NPCs, Thailand also supported the technical cooperation programme in kind. At the regional level and in the framework of TCDC, Thailand had hosted many fellows and scientific visitors from other Member States and had also provided expert services to other Member States.

131. One area of tangible progress through cooperation was food irradiation, which was gaining acceptance among Thai consumers. Six types of irradiated fresh fruit would soon be ready for export. Other applications included the increasing use of the SIT to control insect pests on plantations and, in human health, of PET and cyclotrons, which were already in use at three main hospitals in Bangkok. Based on the success of those projects, Thailand hoped to intensify cooperation with the Agency over the coming five years with respect to the establishment of a new nuclear research centre, the application of isotope techniques for analysis, the use of isotope hydrology in water resource management, in the areas of nutrition and nuclear medicine, and for an economic study on nuclear power for electricity generation.

132. Thailand's nuclear infrastructure had been reorganized. The Office of Atoms for Peace (OAP), the national nuclear competent authority, had been restructured into two entities: the Thailand Institute of Nuclear Technology, taking responsibility for research and development; and the existing OAP retaining its regulatory and policy-making functions. Revision of the 1961 Atomic Energy for Peace Act was planned in order to make it more effective and consistent with international instruments. The Agency's assistance had been helpful for those initiatives. The Center for the Non-Proliferation Treaty had been established within the OAP to enhance its regulatory role in safeguarding nuclear materials in Thailand and to ensure compliance with the comprehensive safeguards agreement, and an SSAC was also being developed. The Bureau of Nuclear Safety Regulation at the OAP was responsible for regulating all nuclear safety activities in Thailand and the regulatory requirements for nuclear reactor licensees, and a number of standards, procedures, guides and codes of conduct, based on the Agency's

safety series documents, were being developed and promulgated. Nuclear safety in Thailand had been strengthened in several areas thanks to Agency assistance. Under the Model Project, Thailand had been upgrading its radiation protection infrastructure so as to be consistent with the BSS and, under a regional project, it had made significant progress towards enhancing the authorization process, although further development was required.

133. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Thailand attached particular importance to the sanctity of the NPT as the global instrument that governed the non-proliferation regime. It was firmly committed to not developing, possessing, acquiring, using or transferring nuclear weapons and related materials. Despite the international community's strenuous efforts to strengthen Agency safeguards and verification, the events of 2005, including the NPT Review Conference, had shown that more needed to be done.

134. The global non-proliferation regime was also strengthened by Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Notwithstanding its positive contribution to worldwide security and stability, non-proliferation should not be considered a one-way street and more efforts should be made towards universal nuclear disarmament. Thailand associated itself with the long-standing position of the NAM which called for all nuclear-weapon States to continue to work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

135. Thailand had followed the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula with great concern, particularly the test-firing of missiles by the DPRK on 5 July 2006, which had had adverse repercussions on the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. Although Security Council resolution 1695 (2006) had been rejected by the DPRK, Thailand hoped that the DPRK would consider a moratorium on missile testing. His delegation urged the DPRK to implement the joint statement on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to resume the six-party talks as soon as possible in order to resolve the situation peacefully. Thailand was ready to play a constructive role in that regard.

136. Another pressing proliferation challenge was the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programme and uranium enrichment capabilities. Thailand believed in the inalienable right of all NPT States Party to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, but in a transparent manner, especially in the context of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol. Thailand supported the proposal of a long-term comprehensive agreement, offered to Iran by the six countries on 1 June 2006, as a constructive way of resolving the situation through dialogue and diplomacy. Adoption of Security Council resolution 1696 on 31 July 2006 did not mean that the window of opportunity for negotiations was no longer open. Thailand urged Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency in providing information on its nuclear programme and at the same time, urged all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to avoid confrontation.

137. In conclusion, he expressed support for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East and said that, as a party to the Bangkok Treaty, Thailand was keen to share its experiences in that regard.

138. Mr. ZSOMBORI (Romania) said that his Government was more interested than ever in nuclear power as a reliable source of energy. In recent years, Romania had achieved sustained economic growth and, consequently, the demand for electricity was expected to increase steadily until the end of the decade. Based on that positive trend, which had been confirmed by several national and international studies, and on the high standards of national nuclear safety, the Romanian Government had decided to complete work on Unit 2 of the Cernavoda nuclear power plant and restart work on Units 3 and 4.

139. In May 2006, Romania's footnote-a/ project, ROM/4/024, to convert the TRIGA research reactor from HEU to LEU, had reached successful completion. Its implementation had been possible

thanks to a voluntary contribution of $4 million from the United States Department of Energy. The Romanian Government had contributed $500 000 and the TCF had allocated approximately $400 000 to the project. The agreement signed between the United States, Romania and the Agency, in accordance with Agency regulations, had provided a legal basis for the transfer of the LEU fresh fuel and for the implementation of the commercial contract. The project had been very important for Romania as the TRIGA reactor was a major part of its nuclear sector. The successful completion of the project confirmed Romania's commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its readiness to cooperate with all interested parties in that regard. The project also reconfirmed the Agency's capacity to fulfil its mandate of promoting the peaceful use of nuclear power in the world. Romania was grateful to all at the Agency who had contributed to implementation of the project. The project proved that States could make considerable progress in enhancing the peaceful use of nuclear energy if they had the political will and a clear strategy, and worked in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. The conversion of the TRIGA reactor was the first project of its kind completed since the launch of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative in May 2004. In Romania's view, that initiative was viable, responded to the needs of all interested parties and offered new cooperation opportunities. Cooperation in implementing such projects was complex, involving technical, commercial, legal, safeguards and safety issues. Romania thanked the United States and French authorities for their assistance in the smooth and timely implementation of the project, as well as the French company CERCA, which was the supplier of the LEU fuel. The participation of the Agency and all interested States operating HEU research reactors was crucial to the success of the initiative.

140. Another high-priority Agency project in Romania was the decommissioning of the VVR-S research reactor. Despite a slow start three years previously, the project had made significant progress in the preceding year. Romania was working together with the Russian authorities to seek a solution to returning the S36-type spent fuel to Russia. The remaining EK10-type spent fuel was the subject of a tripartite agreement among Romania, Ukraine and Russia, which Romania hoped to conclude as promptly as possible order to return the spent fuel to Russia before the start of the decommissioning process. It was also the subject of an agreement between Romania and Russia, which was at an advanced stage of negotiation. Romania welcomed the organization of the workshop on transit arrangements for research reactor irradiated fuel shipments to the Russian Federation, held in Vienna in July 2006 under the RER/4/028 project. Romania hoped that the Agency would take the lead in preparing and proposing framework agreements regarding the transit and repatriation of spent nuclear fuel to its country of origin.

141. His Government was ready to lend its active support to the technical cooperation programme and was confident that the Agency would continue to use Romania's nuclear facilities in the implementation of some projects. An example of the good cooperation between Romania and the Agency was the visit made to the country by the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation in August 2006. Once Romania became a member of the EU, its funding from the Agency for technical cooperation projects would decrease and gradually it would be able to make increasingly significant contributions as a donor.

142. In accordance with its national nuclear strategy, Romania paid special attention to the development and adoption of a proper legislative framework, harmonized with the European Commission's recommendations. In terms of the nuclear sector, Romania had fulfilled all of its requirements for integration into the EU on 1 January 2007.

143. The SIR for 2005, reconfirming the SIR for 2004, listed Romania as one of the 24 States for which the Secretariat had drawn the conclusion that there was no indication of the diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and no indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities. That conclusion was based on a comprehensive assessment made by the Agency, including under the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol.

144. Romania, which supported efforts to combat international terrorism and to implement the Agency's action plan against nuclear terrorism adopted in 2002, was a contributor to the NSF. In 2003 and 2004, with the support of the Office of Nuclear Security, it had organized regional pilot courses on combating nuclear terrorism and the illicit trafficking of nuclear material. As confirmation of its interest in further strengthening cooperation with the Agency in that area, Romania had made another voluntary contribution of €27 800 in May 2006.

145. The final report of the second review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention, held in Vienna earlier in the year, recognized Romania's commitment to improvement of the situation through international cooperation and assistance. Also, it had drawn attention to the quality and comprehensiveness of Romania's national report and its replies to written and oral questions.

146. Romania supported the Agency's efforts to enhance the safety and security of radioactive sources. It was complying with the objectives and principles of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources by developing, harmonizing and implementing specific policies, laws and regulations and by encouraging international cooperation.

147. In conclusion, he underlined Romania's support for the Agency, inter alia, by its consistent and full payment of its assessed contributions to the Regular Budget and its pledges to the TCF.

148. Mr. BEKOE (Ghana) passed on his country's congratulations to the Agency and the Director General for winning the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. Ghana greatly appreciated the Agency's decision to use its share of the prize to create a special fund to support fellowships and training to improve cancer control and the use of stable isotope techniques in childhood nutritional studies in developing countries.

149. Ghana was fully committed to the NPT and would continue to support the efforts of the Agency and its Member States to preserve and promote peace and security through prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Ghana urged all African States to sign and ratify the Pelindaba Treaty and abide by its terms, in order to achieve a NWFZ in Africa.

150. Ghana supported the United States-initiated Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors Programme and had decided to convert its own low-power research reactor from HEU to LEU, provided that only minimal changes to the fuel and core geometry were required and that the reactor's safety and performance would not be seriously compromised.

151. As part of its efforts to respond to the threat of nuclear terrorism, Ghana was developing its capacity to prevent, detect and respond to illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material. The staff of the national regulatory authority, operators of nuclear installations and stakeholders in law enforcement organizations were receiving appropriate training in that regard. Ghana was grateful to the Agency for organizing a regional training course in Accra on combating illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material and for the recent INSServ mission. The results and recommendations of the mission would be carefully evaluated and implemented to strengthen nuclear security in Ghana. Measures would be put in place to ensure the physical protection of nuclear facilities and radioactive sources, to streamline the legal system and to respond effectively to any emergency.

152. Ghana recognized and appreciated the positive use of both human and natural resources and the potential of nuclear energy for addressing socio-economic problems. The country's research and commercial activities focused on human and animal health, nutrition, agriculture, industry and the environment. Mutation breeding and biotechnology research projects were planned with a view to

attaining higher agricultural productivity and developing animal and crop variants tolerant to stress and disease. Studies had already been initiated to obtain vital information on air quality through biomonitoring so as to influence policies for the development of air quality management.

153. Commissioning of the second centre for radiotherapy and nuclear medicine in Ghana had increased the capacity for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients both in Ghana and the surrounding countries. Also on the health front, he thanked the Agency for initiating PACT in Ghana. The proposal that the Agency had helped to prepare to secure funding had been submitted to Ghana's development partners. PACT would certainly help to promote, strengthen and extend the activities of the existing and planned cancer centres. In cooperation with the Agency, it was planned to establish a regional cancer training institute in Ghana for the training of radiation oncologists, medical physicists and associated technologists.

154. Increasing energy demand to support Ghana's industrial development and growing concern over the greenhouse effect meant that nuclear power was likely to be introduced into the country's energy mix in the near future. While the Agency's assistance in developing a long-term national strategic plan for energy was appreciated, the slow progress towards acquiring nuclear power facilities was causing impatience. Energy demand was outstripping the current supply and increasing petroleum prices were an aggravating factor.

155. In response to previous General Conference resolutions emphasizing the importance of the preservation of nuclear knowledge and information management, Ghana had established a postgraduate school of nuclear and allied sciences at the University of Ghana. The school had just opened and was running eight accredited MPhil and PhD programmes in medical physics, radiation protection, environmental protection, nuclear and radiochemistry, nuclear engineering, nuclear agriculture and radiation processing. The Government of Ghana appreciated the effective collaboration and cooperation of the Department of Technical Cooperation in establishing the school. For its survival and growth, the Agency's continued support was required to develop institutional capacity and promote networking with regional and other nuclear educational institutions in Member States.

156. Ghana was grateful to the Agency for supporting AFRA projects on sustainable energy development, combating desertification in the Sahel region, use of the SIT, and other projects related to agriculture, health, industry and the environment. The Agency was recognized increasingly as a partner in development and was already a major contributor to attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The Agency should continue to seek partnerships with organizations sharing common objectives in order to assist sustainable development in Member States.

157. Mr. BALZAN (Malta) said that the skilful leadership of the Director General, together with the professionalism and dedication of his staff, would ensure that the Agency continued to pursue its goals with positive and effective results. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize was the ultimate recognition of the excellent work the Agency carried out for the benefit of mankind and was an acknowledgement of its many achievements.

158. The best way for the international community to succeed in its quest for peace and security was through an effective multilateral system. Malta viewed the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and called upon States not yet party to the NPT to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States as promptly as possible. It was regrettable that the 2005 NPT Review Conference had been unable to produce a consensus document and Malta hoped that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, scheduled for May 2007, would take matters forward.

159. Malta recognized the pivotal role that the Agency played within the international multilateral system. It was an essential part of the non-proliferation regime and, through the implementation of its

safeguards, played an indispensable role in maintaining international peace and security. Malta welcomed the recent initiatives aimed at strengthening the Agency's activities in that regard, for example the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute and the modification of the SQP.

160. Since the Agency was essentially a technical means towards a political end, it was vital that it remain neutral on the more sensitive issues before it. In that context, Malta commended the manner in which the Director General and his team had responded to some of the recent challenges facing the international community.

161. The comprehensive safeguards agreement combined with the additional protocol, which had improved the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear material, constituted the Agency's current verification standard. All States that had no yet done so should bring into force an additional protocol at the earliest opportunity.

162. Another important dimension of the Agency's work was its efforts to create a global nuclear safety regime. The Agency's role in promoting nuclear safety assumed greater significance as the international community faced increased security threats. Malta supported fully the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and saw the consolidation of safety principles into a single document as a positive development. With the Agency's support, his Government had enacted the necessary legislation on radiation protection and nuclear safety and security and had established a national regulatory authority, the Radiation Protection Board.

163. The undiminished threat of terrorism was real, multifaceted and recognized no borders, and Malta was committed to fighting it in all its forms. The illicit trade in nuclear equipment and technology was a matter of increasing concern. Malta appreciated the Agency's actions aimed at combating nuclear terrorism, particularly through its nuclear security plan. The full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was essential to prevent terrorist groups or individuals from acquiring nuclear material and technology.

164. As a non-nuclear State which benefited from Agency cooperation in such areas as human health, Malta attached great importance to the technical cooperation programme. As a small island with very limited natural resources, Malta depended on continued investment in its human resources to enable its people to achieve a decent standard of living. Agency assistance in the medical uses of radiation, protection of the environment, radioactive waste storage, strengthening of regulatory capabilities, preservation of cultural heritage and national preparedness in the event of a radiological accident was a most welcome addition to such investment.

165. Malta participated in a number of national and regional projects within the framework of the technical cooperation programme. Those activities provided excellent opportunities for a number of dedicated personnel to participate in training courses and international conferences related to their professional work. His delegation noted with satisfaction the Agency's efforts to improve the effectiveness of the programme through increased dialogue with Member States and higher quality projects. Malta applauded the efforts being made to improve technical cooperation in areas such as human health, agriculture and the environment, and welcomed PACT. Such initiatives enabled not only governments but also citizens to benefit from the tangible results of Agency programmes. Malta urged the Secretariat to increase cooperation with other institutions in order to make the technical cooperation programme even more effective.

166. Mr. NEZAM (Afghanistan) said the Agency's 50th anniversary was an occasion to recall the dual nature of nuclear energy which, on the one hand, possessed the power to destruct and, on the other, played a major role in development.

167. Among the challenges facing the General Conference, nuclear proliferation posed a real threat to international peace and security and was therefore a source of deep concern for the international community. The Government of Afghanistan, which condemned any attempt to use nuclear technology for non-peaceful or terrorist purposes, welcomed the efforts being made by the Agency to combat nuclear terrorism. That threat required an appropriate response from the international community. Afghanistan welcomed the unanimous adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism by the General Assembly and was taking the necessary steps to ratify the Convention.

168. Afghanistan underlined the importance of universal adherence to all international non-proliferation instruments, including in the nuclear field. For its own part, it had already ratified its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency, and its additional protocol had entered into force in July 2005. It was important to reaffirm the right of States to use nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes, as laid down in Article IV of the NPT. Respecting that inalienable right would further strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Nuclear technology could make a key contribution to development.

169. Afghanistan welcomed the active role played by the Agency in promoting and developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy in various fields. More attention should be given to the LDCs to allow them to make up ground in the field of nuclear knowledge and to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

170. As regards the peaceful use of nuclear technology, Afghanistan had assigned priority to the areas of health, agriculture and water resources. Aware of the need for an adequate radiation protection and waste safety infrastructure, Afghanistan was in the process of preparing, with the Agency's help, its radiation protection legislation with a view to having effective regulations and promoting nuclear technology. In 2005, the Government of Afghanistan had invited Agency experts to the country to help the authorities to identify and formulate the country's urgent needs for its CPF. In April 2006, the Agency had sent a mission to Afghanistan to facilitate elaboration of the programme for the 2007–2008 cycle. The programme developed covered areas such as health, agriculture, water, science and the environment. Furthermore, the Department of Technical Cooperation had recently organized a workshop in Vienna, inviting a number of senior officials from Afghanistan. Excellent work had been accomplished and a programme for the 2007–2008 cycle had been finalized by Agency experts and their Afghan counterparts. He expressed Afghanistan's gratitude for the organization of that workshop.

171. Solid bases had been established to allow the medium-term implementation of a peaceful nuclear energy programme in Afghanistan. Despite the difficult situation in the country, his delegation hoped that the programme would commence at the earliest opportunity, since Afghanistan's nuclear technology needs, particularly in the field of health, were urgent. Although Afghanistan's population numbered about 30 million, it did not have a radiotherapy service. The number of cancer patients was growing constantly and those patients had to go to neighbouring countries in order to obtain treatment. In that regard, Afghanistan was a keen supporter of PACT. The application of nuclear techniques in the health sector, particularly in the fields of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, was a very important part of PACT, which included plans to create a radiotherapy and diagnosis centre.

172. Under the 2007–2008 cycle, priority was attached to setting up a competent national regulatory structure for radiation protection and nuclear safety under the National Environmental Protection Agency and establishing a national office for radiation protection and monitoring under the Ministry of Public Health. The programme also included projects on soil fertility and increasing agricultural production, human resource training and management, and water resources management.

173. The Agency's efforts to include Afghanistan in regional training programmes were welcome. They enhanced the country's capabilities to use nuclear techniques in its development strategy.

174. Despite financial difficulties, Afghanistan had undertaken to honour its obligations vis-à-vis the Agency under the agreed payment schedule.

175. Ms. VENSON-MOITOI (Botswana) conveyed her country's congratulations to the Director General and the Agency for winning the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. She noted with concern and sadness the fragility of peace in many parts of the world, the consequential loss of life and destruction to property, and prayed that future differences would be solved around the negotiating table, not on the battlefield.

176. Botswana believed in the peaceful uses of atomic energy for all mankind and upheld the principles of the NPT. Any attempt to divert atomic energy to military uses, whether directly or indirectly, had to be discouraged at all costs.

177. Developments in Botswana in the preceding year included elaboration of a radiation protection bill and its approval by parliament, submission of the radiation protection regulations to the Attorney General for finalization, and the establishment of a radiation protection inspectorate. Botswana had signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the Agency, and had just signed a revised supplementary agreement concerning the provision of Agency technical assistance. Botswana intended to comply with its obligations under the comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol, and to cooperate fully with the Agency on related issues. It was grateful for the Agency's invaluable assistance in the form of expert advice, monitoring, equipment and staff training. With such unwavering support, Botswana was confident that it would achieve the five milestones set out by the Agency. Also in 2005, Botswana had acceded to AFRA, which had the potential to assist in solving common regional problems and to promote the sharing of knowledge and expertise essential to sustainable development.

178. Botswana's agricultural sector was crucial to its food security, so the Agency's technical cooperation projects in that area were invaluable. The ongoing project BOT/5/002 in support of tsetse eradication from Ngamiland was one of the most important undertakings in the country. It aimed to prevent outbreaks of sleeping sickness, improve crop and livestock production and protect the national tourism industry. Through the CPF, proposals had been made to collaborate with the Agency on soil and water management practices, crop nutrition, plant and animal breeding and diagnosis of livestock diseases using nuclear and related techniques.

179. In the area of human resource development, there was potential to establish cooperation with the University of Botswana to introduce formal training in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and ionizing radiation safety. Studies could be initiated to determine radon concentrations in work and residential areas and on the impact of naturally occurring radioactive material, thereby contributing to maintaining a safe and healthy environment.

180. Water was a scarce commodity in Botswana, especially in rural villages. Isotopic data could be used to estimate aquifer recharge, which could in turn determine the long-term sustainable yields. Sources of leakage from existing dams could also be investigated and solutions suggested. In that way, Botswana could attain its objective of a national water development and distribution strategy that would make water affordable and accessible to all its citizens.

181. Botswana's mineral industry utilized nuclear technology extensively in process automation and control, diamond recovery, non-destructive testing and security. Nucleonic devices were also used widely in wireline geophysics to determine rock mass density and porosity. Baggage screening and non-destructive testing ensured reliable security and quality control procedures.

182. Visits by Agency experts in 2006 had helped Botswana to evaluate its needs in the health sector and to make informed decisions on ways to improve its health-care facilities. Efforts were under way to set up a radiotherapy service and to establish a high dose rate brachytherapy unit for the treatment of cervical cancer. The Agency's support in that area would help Botswana to meet its objective of providing affordable health care to all citizens.

183. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to challenge the country's health-care system and cancer statistics were rising. The Agency's assistance had provided impetus to find a sustainable solution using nuclear technology. Management of the HIV/AIDS scourge could also be supported through food and nutrition intervention techniques using stable isotopes.

184. In conclusion, she assured the Agency of Botswana's continuing readiness to support it in every possible way.

185. Mr. CORDEN (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) said that the Commission's activities were aimed at establishing a global verification regime to monitor compliance with the comprehensive ban on all nuclear test explosions, as well as the promotion of signatures and ratifications for the entry into force of the CTBT.

186. Since its adoption ten years previously, the Treaty had become increasingly universal in its status, having been signed by 176 States and ratified by 135. The ratifying States included 34 of the 44 States whose ratification was required for the Treaty to enter into force. In order to promote signature and ratification and to assist developing countries in strengthening their national capabilities to implement the CTBT, the Commission served as a focal point for activities, underwritten by voluntary contributions. In that regard, Australia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Finland, Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the EU had offered voluntary contributions.

187. The CTBT provided for the establishment of a unique global verification regime, consisting of the International Monitoring System (IMS), a consultation and clarification process, on-site inspections, and confidence-building measures. Data from IMS stations around the globe were processed and analysed by the International Data Centre (IDC) in Vienna, and all IMS data and IDC products were made available to signatory States, which provided valuable national and international security benefits, and had civil and scientific applications.

188. The Commission and its Provisional Technical Secretariat had made significant progress in preparing for the effective implementation of the CTBT, particularly in the transition from build-up to provisional operation. The building of IMS stations and other elements of the verification system had continued and coordination of the provisional operation and maintenance of the complete system had been developed further. The operations centre established in 2005 now functioned as a single point of contact for all network operations, providing centralized information on network status, centralized network supervision functions and support of incident management functions.

189. By the end of August 2006, 171 IMS stations and 7 radionuclide laboratories had been certified, which represented over 52% of the total IMS facilities provided for in the Treaty. Also, 72% of the IMS seismic, hydroacoustic, radionuclide and infrasound stations had been installed, nearly 60% of which were now included in IDC operations with their data being processed routinely, thereby contributing to the Centre's products.

190. IMS data and IDC products were not only useful for national and international nuclear security, but they also had potential civil and scientific purposes, such as rapid notification of the location and size of earthquakes, scientific studies of the Earth — including its oceans and atmosphere, early detection of volcanic eruptions and warnings to aviation of volcanic ash in the atmosphere. Several

international and national tsunami warning institutions receiving continuous IMS data had confirmed that it increased their ability to identify potentially tsunamigenic earthquakes and to issue warnings more rapidly. The Global Communications Infrastructure (GCI) transmitted IMS data to the IDC and disseminated it, along with IDC products, to signatory States. The Provisional Technical Secretariat operated the GCI as a worldwide, closed and secure communications network, largely using satellite communication. Once fully operational, the GCI network was expected to carry 11 gigabytes of data daily. The installation of very small aperture terminals at remote locations had continued, with over 200 installed in 80 signatory States.

191. By establishing a secure signatory account, signatory States could receive IMS data and IDC products on a provisional basis at their national data centres. In addition, the Commission provided training opportunities to signatory States, and offered them advanced monitoring software and a limited quantity of surplus hardware for their national data centres. By the end of August 2006, around 100 secure signatory accounts had been established, with a total of about 780 users authorized to access IMS data and IDC products and to receive technical support from the Provisional Technical Secretariat. A national data centre evaluation workshop was planned to be held in Kiev, Ukraine, in October 2006.

192. Regarding the on-site inspection programme, guidelines were being implemented for the planning, preparation, conduct and evaluation of an integrated field exercise to be conducted in 2008 as part of the programme for developing on-site inspection capabilities. The field exercise would represent an important step towards operational readiness for the inspections and the capability to carry them out after the Treaty had entered into force.

193. Providing and facilitating training courses for signatory States, particularly developing countries, was an important part of the Commission's work. It also promoted cooperation among signatory States to facilitate exchanges related to technologies used in the CTBT, as well as to support strengthened national capabilities for the implementation of the Treaty. In that regard, the Provisional Technical Secretariat regularly organized international cooperation workshops among States at the regional and subregional level, and additional training courses were organized by donor States for experts from developing countries. To launch a new component of its training programmes, the Provisional Technical Secretariat had developed a concept for building capacity through e-training. It would allow for more training of participants through web-conferencing, and provide continuously available and updated training modules through computer-based training.

194. Several workshops and training courses were to be conducted by signatory States in cooperation with the Provisional Technical Secretariat. The United States of America was hosting an infrasound technology workshop on 25–28 September 2006, Croatia would host an IDC regional training course on 25–29 September 2006, and Chile planned to lead a hydroacoustics workshop in May 2007. The Government of Kenya had offered to host a national data centre evaluation workshop in 2007, contributing to capacity-building for national data centres, particularly those in developing countries.

195. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Treaty, a scientific symposium entitled "CTBT: Synergies with Science, 1996–2006 and Beyond" had been held in Vienna on 31 August and 1 September 2006. The participants had considered it to be both timely and successful, and noted that it had stimulated a number of ideas on how to increase contacts between the Commission and the scientific community. The Commission thanked the Director General for giving a keynote address to the symposium. In addition, Hungary had hosted an expert meeting on the civil and scientific applications of CTBT verification technologies in Budapest on 2–3 September 2006, with the Government of Hungary providing financial and logistical support.

196. The Provisional Technical Secretariat now had around 270 staff members from 70 countries, 175 of whom were in the Professional category. The Secretariat was committed to its policy of equal employment opportunities and over 26% of Professional positions were held by women. Efforts were being made to promote further the employment of staff from developing countries and the number of women in the Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.