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President: Mr. HAMZE (Lebanon)

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[1] GC(51)/22.

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(51)/INF/14/Rev.1.

Abbreviations used in this record:

CHASNUPP	Chashma nuclear power plant
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
G8	Group of Eight
GIF	Generation IV International Forum
GNEP	Global Nuclear Energy Partnership
ICTP	International Centre for Theoretical Physics (Trieste)
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSARR	Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactors
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
KANUPP	Karachi nuclear power plant
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NPCs	national participation costs
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

SQP	small quantities protocol
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2006 (continued) (GC(51)/5)

1. Mr. KIM Woo-Sik (Republic of Korea) said that his country regarded the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as conditional upon securing sustainable energy sources. The Republic of Korea was confident that nuclear power would increasingly play a significant role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals since it fitted the sustainability criteria better than any other available sources. Furthermore, the use of nuclear technology in the agricultural, medical and industrial sectors had efficiently and effectively helped in combating poverty and hunger as well.

2. The Republic of Korea had successfully constructed and operated nuclear power plants since 1978. It was now the world's sixth largest country in terms of nuclear power generation, and had 20 nuclear power plants. Nuclear power supplied 40% of electricity for the country; four more nuclear power plants were under construction and another four were in the planning stage. The Republic of Korea welcomed the close cooperation with Member States, in particular in the construction of large-scale plants, and the opportunity to share its experience in the development of small and medium-sized reactors. It hoped that its efforts and experience in using an integrated modular reactor for seawater desalination and power generation could help other Member States that were suffering from a shortage of water.

3. The Republic of Korea's third comprehensive nuclear promotion plan, launched in January 2007 as a five-year plan, would facilitate the expanded application of nuclear technology in nuclear energy development, medicine, agriculture and the preservation of the environment.

4. The Republic of Korea was a strong supporter of international collaboration in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and had been actively participating in INPRO and the GIF; his country was committed to the innovation of nuclear facilities and fuel cycles in collaboration with Member States.

5. Nuclear fusion was an important tool to address future energy demand, and his country expected that the Agency would play the leading role in developing the safety principles, guidelines and technical standards for fusion systems.

6. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be promoted in accordance with the highest standards of nuclear safety, and close collaboration among Member States in that regard should be further consolidated. The respective international conventions had greatly contributed to securing nuclear safety, and the Republic of Korea reaffirmed its commitment to comply with them. The Republic of Korea would also maintain its efforts to secure nuclear safety domestically. In that regard, he said that Yonggwang Units 5 and 6 had been evaluated in 2007 as the safest nuclear power plants ever, following the comprehensive OSART review. Kori Unit 1 had been successfully peer-reviewed for the safety aspects of long-term operation in July 2007. The Republic of Korea had established a national radiological emergency plan and implemented radiological emergency laws to protect the public and the environment from the possible harmful effects of accidents; it was now working on the technological partnership between the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre and AtomCARE, and welcomed expanded cooperation with Member States. The Republic of Korea planned to develop the nuclear safety school at the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety into a more globalized centre for sharing experience and competence, and for contributing to the improvement of global nuclear safety.

7. One of the most critical issues in his country's nuclear energy sector had been settled in 2005. Following a referendum, the country's first radioactive waste repository was to be located in a 1.98 million m^2 area on the coast near Gyeongju; initially it would house 100 000 drums of radioactive waste underground, and 800 000 drums when completed. His country also planned to build a proton accelerator and move the headquarters of the state-run Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Company to the region.

8. Over the last fifty years, the Republic of Korea had successfully developed nuclear technology through various cooperation programmes with the Agency. In commemoration of the Agency's 50th anniversary, a special conference had been hosted in Seoul in July 2007. The 2007 Summer Institute of the World Nuclear University had successfully been held in his country in 2007. The Republic of Korea also hosted the RCA Regional Office and welcomed the opportunity to share nuclear knowledge and expertise with Member States through educational programmes and local communities.

9. Since ratification of the NPT, the Republic of Korea had held the firm position that peaceful uses of nuclear energy should comply with the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Since his country's proclamation in 2004 of the four principles for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, it had made every effort to strengthen its legal and institutional framework in order to reinforce its national nuclear control system. In 2006, the Korea Institute of Nuclear Non-proliferation and Control had been established as an independent organization for the purpose of nuclear material accounting and control, and the provision of compulsory education for nuclear control. The Republic of Korea was working closely with the Agency to implement integrated safeguards. By strengthening its nuclear material accounting system, the Republic of Korea would be making every possible effort to ensure the safe and thorough management of even the smallest amount of nuclear materials.

10. Peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue was vital for solid peace on the Korean Peninsula and for the promotion of peace and prosperity in North East Asia. The visits to the DPRK by the Director General and the Agency inspection team in March and July 2007 had been a very significant step towards settlement of the issue. His country requested the Agency and Member States to provide continuous support for the peaceful settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue.

11. Despite difficult conditions, the Republic of Korea had laid the foundation for the most active programme for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in the world thanks to the support of the Agency and Member States, and it was now time for it to give back what it had received. His country would continue its efforts to deepen cooperation with its many international partners who might be in need of its knowledge and experience in promoting the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

12. Mr. ASSELBORN (Luxembourg) congratulated the Agency, in its 50th anniversary year, for its tireless efforts to achieve its main objectives, namely the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

13. Although the threat of a nuclear disaster was not as immediate as it had been when the Agency had been established, the world was facing new threats. Under cover of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, or through illicit buying networks, States were attempting to acquire nuclear or military radiological capability in blatant contradiction to the non-proliferation regime. Despite the undeniable progress made in the reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, the existence of thousands of warheads in the arsenals of the major powers remained a matter of concern for nuclear disarmament. In order to prevent a new arms race, standards in the field of non-proliferation must be strengthened and the nuclear-weapon-States must commit themselves to the progressive reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

14. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and Luxembourg remained committed to its three mutually reinforcing pillars. Non-compliance with safeguards obligations under the NPT and the illicit trafficking of sensitive nuclear materials and equipment constituted the greatest threats to the non-proliferation regime. Efforts must be made to preserve the integrity of that regime, and to strengthen implementation of the NPT through the revision process.

15. Safeguards agreements alone were not enough to prevent the development of clandestine nuclear programmes. All States should therefore sign, ratify and implement an additional protocol, and ensure compliance with their safeguards agreements.

16. The CTBT was another important tool in the nuclear disarmament process, and its entry into force would help to raise global security. He therefore called on those States that had not yet done so, in particular those listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify the Treaty with a view to its early entry into force. It was also essential that progress be made on a non-discriminatory, universal treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons and in other explosive devices.

17. Luxembourg welcomed the recent developments in the DPRK. The shutdown of the Yongbyon facility and the implementation of surveillance and verification activities by the Agency were a first step towards compliance by the DPRK with its international obligations and towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. He hoped that efforts in that regard would be continued. Luxembourg urged the DPRK to implement Security Council resolution 1718 (2006) and to completely dismantle its nuclear programme in a verifiable and irreversible manner, and to return to the NPT immediately.

18. The recent agreement between the Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran was a step in the right direction, and Luxembourg fully supported the Director General's ongoing efforts to resolve the outstanding issues. However, Luxembourg was concerned that Iran had not always taken the necessary steps to comply with the three relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular regarding the suspension of enrichment-related activities. It called upon Iran to suspend any such activities with a view to achieving the 'double time-out' suggested by the Director General. It was politically ill-advised to evoke the possibility of war with Iran; the option of military intervention should be discounted at all costs, and every effort should be made to explore all possible diplomatic channels. Iran should implement the recent agreement with the Agency, and Luxembourg encouraged it to reconsider the offer forward in 2006 by the European Union High Representative on behalf of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

19. Luxembourg fully supported the steps being taken to prevent terrorist groups gaining access to nuclear weapons or explosive devices. It had recently joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and had taken an active part in the process to amend the CPPNM.

20. As a party to the NPT, Luxembourg recognized the right of each State to use nuclear energy to meet growing energy demand. However, it had chosen not to produce nuclear energy to meet its energy needs. The demand for access to nuclear fuel and the supply of enriched uranium was likely to increase significantly in the years to come, and it was important to prevent the uncontrolled expansion of enrichment centres and attempts to harness the technology for military purposes. Luxembourg welcomed the initiative of the Agency and the options put forward by different States, including the European Union, to establish a multilateral mechanism for the assured supply of nuclear fuel — ideally in the form of a fuel bank under the auspices of the Agency. He encouraged the Agency and the States concerned to engage in productive discussions in order to establish such a mechanism.

21. In view of its geographical location and the proximity of power plants to its borders, Luxembourg attached great importance to all issues relating to nuclear safety. It had developed a plan

for intervention in the event of a nuclear accident; the emergency plan was regularly the subject of national, bilateral and international exercises. International cooperation was essential in order to strengthen nuclear safety, waste management, physical protection of nuclear material and action in the event of a radiological emergency. He urged those States that had not already done so to accede to and implement the relevant conventions as soon as possible and to benefit from exchanges of expertise. Luxembourg, for its part, had sought to maintain an international dialogue and had concluded bilateral agreements with France and Belgium providing for close collaboration on all aspects of nuclear safety.

22. The Agency's technical cooperation programme was one of the most effective tools to promote the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and served to improve the quality of life in many developing countries. Luxembourg welcomed the progress made through the programme and urged the Agency to strengthen its technical cooperation activities. The Agency could, as in previous years, count on Luxembourg's support.

23. Mr. BASHA (Albania), expressing his appreciation to those who had supported Albania's candidacy for election to the Board of Governors, said that Albania would do its utmost to meet expectations.

24. Albania's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation was a foreign policy priority, as was the need to meet obligations under the relevant international treaties. His Government therefore attached particular importance to the implementation of all General Conference resolutions and Board decisions, especially those that aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the international safeguards system. He called on all countries to cooperate fully with the Agency and to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions concerning nuclear enrichment and reprocessing activities.

25. His Government had signed an additional protocol and procedures for its ratification had begun. The final legislative measures would also be taken to complete and adopt a comprehensive national atomic law that would include safeguards-related issues and the relevant structures to ensure that all nuclear and radiation-related obligations, requirements and standards were met.

26. Albania attached equal importance to all other non-safeguards-related activities. His Government recognized that the application of nuclear technologies made an important contribution to development and to national plans and programmes. Efforts were being made to ensure radiation protection, safety and security in the application of non-power nuclear technologies; to improve and consolidate the regulatory framework; to adapt and harmonize relevant national infrastructures; and consolidate the legal basis for all nuclear-related activities.

27. Albania sought to reap maximum benefits from the Agency's experience and expertise through the technical cooperation programme and PACT. His Government would continue to honour its national commitments in that regard, including by paying in full and on time its financial obligations to the Agency. His country was grateful to the Agency for its extensive cooperation and support in the implementation of a wide range of projects that had yielded positive results in the country, in particular in the area of human health. His Government welcomed the Agency's focus on human health, and hoped that it would be further strengthened. Albania would continue to demonstrate its full commitment to such projects and activities, including through continued cost-sharing.

28. His Government attached high priority to continuing cooperation in the area of nuclear security, which was essential in preventing and combating terrorist activities, the illicit trafficking of radioactive materials, and in reducing radiological threats. His country would continue to fully support the Agency's activities aimed at promoting the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology in all Member States.

29. Mr. SUN Qin (China) read out a message from Mr. Wen Jiabao, in which the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China congratulated the Director General and the Agency on its 50th anniversary, and noted that, after half a century of development, nuclear energy was now widely used in areas such as industry, agriculture, human health and the environment and had contributed substantially to the sustainable development of humanity. The Agency, as the only international body responsible for nuclear affairs, had always discharged its statutory responsibilities faithfully, and had made unremitting efforts to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons worldwide. The award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize had demonstrated that the international community recognized and supported the Agency's important role in that regard. The development of the peaceful use of nuclear energy was both an opportunity and a challenge, and China would continue to support the Agency in its work.

30. Speaking on behalf of his delegation, he said that with rapid global economic development, the contradiction between energy supply and environmental protection was becoming increasingly prominent. A growing number of countries were looking to nuclear energy as a clean, safe and mature technology for large-scale application. While some developed countries continued their nuclear power expansion, more and more developing countries were starting to develop or were considering developing nuclear power. China was one of the countries to have announced ambitious plans for developing nuclear power, and certain countries in South East Asia and the Middle East were making active preparations for the construction of their first nuclear power plants. The development of nuclear energy was gaining strong momentum worldwide.

31. Over the previous year, important nuclear power developments had taken place in China. With Units 1 and 2 of the Tianwan nuclear power plant having started commercial operation in May and August 2007, the country now had eleven nuclear power reactors in operation with a total installed capacity of 9 100 MW. In order to meet the target of 40 000 MW of installed nuclear power capacity by 2020 and a further 18 000 MW under construction, China had started to introduce advanced Generation III nuclear power technology. It continued to meet the rapidly growing demand for power through the construction of several Generation II-plus nuclear power units, characterized by proven technology, safe performance and strong competitiveness. China had both accelerated the construction of new plants and intensified research into high-temperature gas-cooled reactors and fast reactors. The construction of a 20 MW experimental fast reactor and initial research into certain key technologies for a 200 MW high-temperature gas-cooled reactor project were underway. China had also participated actively in the Agency's INPRO project, and had become a full member of the GIF and of ITER in November 2006.

32. China cooperated extensively with the Agency and other member States by hosting relevant international conferences. The China Atomic Energy Authority and the Agency would jointly host a ministerial conference on nuclear power for the 21st century in Beijing in 2009. He encouraged ministers responsible for nuclear affairs from all countries to attend.

33. The past year had seen both the revitalization of nuclear power and serious challenges to nuclear non-proliferation. The international community must work together to address urgently challenges relating to the safety of nuclear facilities, waste management, radioactive source management and the implementation of safeguards obligations by Member States. It must further dispel concerns about nuclear energy development and work towards sustainable development.

34. China welcomed the Agency's achievements in the areas of promotion and non-proliferation. In 2006, new resources for technical cooperation had increased in comparison to the previous year, as had rates of attainment and programme implementation, which had had a positive impact on socio-economic development in Member States. The Agency had supported Member States in developing and improving national nuclear safety regulation and emergency response systems by providing

integrated safety review services, issuing basic safety standards, coordinating nuclear emergency response and radioactive source regulation, and offering technical training. The Agency had also used extrabudgetary funds to give developing countries additional assistance in the area of safety.

35. The Agency had taken active measures to implement nuclear security programmes to counter the growing threat of international nuclear terrorism. It had published a series of nuclear security documents, updated the Illicit Trafficking Database, provided security guidance for large-scale public events, and held seminars and training courses to help Member States enhance their nuclear security capacity. At the end of 2006, the CAEA-IAEA Joint Training Centre on Nuclear Safeguards and Security had been formally established in Beijing. The Centre would provide training services to China and other Member States in the Asia-Pacific region. In June 2007, China had signed a practical cooperation arrangement with the Agency that involved targeted cooperation on nuclear security for the 2008 Olympic Games and the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai. China appreciated the Agency's assistance in the area of nuclear security and commended the Agency on its efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism globally.

36. As international verification became increasingly arduous, the Agency was faced with the challenge of improving its verification methodology and its capacity to analyse environmental samples, in order to ensure that verification and safeguards conclusions were accurate and timely. China would support the Agency's efforts to update the software and hardware of its safeguards laboratories and increase the number and capacity of network laboratories through cooperation with Member States. In August 2007, China had signed a cooperation arrangement with the Agency to launch its safeguards support programme formally, attesting to its efforts to help strengthen the Agency's safeguards system and verification capacity.

37. During the past year, the Agency had played a major role in resolving the DPRK and Iranian nuclear issues. It had monitored and verified the shutdown and sealing of nuclear facilities in the DPRK and agreed a work plan to resolve outstanding issues with Iran. Its objectivity, impartiality and professionalism had won broad appreciation from the international community, including China.

38. The Agency had assisted Member States in promoting nuclear technology through technical cooperation programmes, thus helping to maintain the importance of nuclear power in the global energy mix and expand the application of nuclear technology in various fields. In order to cast off the shadows of the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl nuclear accidents, the Agency had cooperated with Member States in drawing up a series of legal instruments relating to nuclear safety, including the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention. The work of the Agency's OSART and IRRT teams and of INSARR had also helped to increase nuclear safety worldwide.

39. Despite the Agency's outstanding achievements in promoting nuclear energy development and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, much remained to be done. Several key issues required increased attention. With the rapid development of the global economy and the threat posed by climate change, increasing numbers of developing countries were turning to nuclear energy. The Agency's actions to assist Member States in developing nuclear safety regulatory systems and infrastructures, building managerial capabilities for running industrial programmes, and providing staff education and training had a direct bearing on the sustainable development of the international nuclear energy industry.

40. As the share of nuclear energy in the global energy mix continued to grow, assured supply of nuclear fuel had become a key concern of the international community. In view of the complexities involved, careful consideration should be given to the development of a multilateral mechanism for nuclear fuel supply, with a view to achieving a practical solution acceptable to all parties concerned, in

particular the developing countries. The issue was essentially economic and technological in nature and should not be politicized.

41. Efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must complement each other. In discharging its non-proliferation mandate, the Agency must develop new concepts and techniques to ensure the effectiveness of its verification regime and deal with new situations and issues appropriately. The Agency had faithfully implemented its mandate over the previous 50 years, and he was convinced that the Agency would achieve new glories in the 50 years to come.

42. Ms. SONJICA (South Africa), welcoming the new members of the Agency, said that is was encouraging to note the increasing representation of the African continent in the Agency. South Africa welcomed the positive developments with regard to the DPRK nuclear programme, including the initial actions agreed to during the six-party talks. South Africa welcomed the ad hoc monitoring and verification arrangement that was being implemented by the Agency with the cooperation of the DPRK, but remained concerned that the Agency was still unable to draw any conclusions regarding the DPRK's nuclear activities. It was South Africa's hope that the DPRK would return to the NPT process, eliminate all its nuclear weapons and place all its material and facilities under Agency safeguards.

43. With regard to the implementation of NPT safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran, South Africa noted that the Agency continued to be able to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material, and that Iran had been providing the Agency with access to declared nuclear material, including the required nuclear material accountancy reports in connection with the declared nuclear material and facilities. It was also noteworthy that important progress had been made to resolve some of the outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Full implementation of the agreed work plan between Iran and the Agency in accordance with the timelines set out therein, could help to build the necessary confidence to spark the resumption of negotiations between Iran and all concerned parties. That would avoid a confrontation, which no one desired and which would have catastrophic consequences for all. The Director General had placed the international community on a path towards the peaceful resolution of the issues surrounding the Iranian nuclear programme.

44. South Africa was a proponent of nuclear disarmament and a supporter of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The NPT remained the only international instrument that not only sought to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons but also contained the legal commitment for their elimination. The only absolute guarantee against the use of such weapons was their complete elimination and the assurance that they would never be produced again. As long as some countries had nuclear weapons, there would be others who would aspire to possess them. The continued possession of nuclear weapons, or the retention of the nuclear weapons option by some States, created the very real danger that they might be used or might fall into the hands of non-State actors.

45. The pursuance of energy security was not only a right of all States but also a global responsibility; it was necessary to ensure that no unwarranted restrictions were imposed on the right of States to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Further modalities for preventing the diversion of those sensitive technologies might be required in order to ensure that such activities could be pursued with the necessary assurances. South Africa strongly supported a non-discriminatory approach that would assure the supply of nuclear fuel, whilst fully respecting the choices of States and protecting their inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, consistent with their non-proliferation obligations. South Africa's recent draft nuclear energy policy and strategy, currently under public discussion, provided the framework for an extensive nuclear programme. South Africa's policy was driven by issues of security of energy supply and global climate change as well as making use of national strategic mineral resources for economic development. The resurgence in the use of

nuclear energy for electricity production was strong, and many countries, including South Africa, had realized the need to diversify their energy mix. Approximately 6% of South Africa's electricity was generated from nuclear, and the electricity utility, Eskom, was currently investigating the expansion of its nuclear power capacity to 20 000 MW by 2025. Eskom was considering advanced pressurized water reactors with a combined capacity of around 3500 MW. Initial processes of acquiring environmental authorizations had begun and negotiations with vendors were expected to start in the next six months. High-temperature pebble bed modular reactor technology was under development by, with the intention of constructing a 165 MW electric demonstration nuclear reactor system on the Koeberg site, near Cape Town, and a fuel plant at Pelindaba, near Pretoria. The required environmental and nuclear licensing authorizations were being obtained. Pebble bed modular reactor technology was focused not only on electricity production but also on process heat applications for industry.

46. South Africa had signed a CPF for 2006–2010 with the Agency and contributed regularly to the technical cooperation programme, with South African experts carrying out missions in Member States. The completion and demonstration of the conditioning unit for sealed high-activity radioactive sources by the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation in March 2007 had been a great success. In partnership with the Agency, South Africa would be hosting a regional conference on energy and water for sustainable development in 2008. South Africa also hosted a number of workshops and training courses, and was grateful for the Agency's continued support for capacity building. In the past year, the Agency had been requested to assist in the establishment of a regional regulatory forum on radiation safety. South Africa had hosted an international workshop on a common framework for the safety of radioactive waste management and disposal in July 2007.

47. South Africa was committed to the use of Agency safety standards as a benchmark, and recommended greater harmonization between the requirements related to safety and those related to security, since they were interdependent in many cases. In the past year South Africa had had two visits from the Agency's Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, which had included interaction with all State role-players involved in monitoring exports and imports; a clear programme aimed at strengthening nuclear security, with special emphasis on border control, had been developed. An illicit trafficking workshop for the region had been hosted by the Agency with a view to strengthening controls over the movement of nuclear material.

48. South Africa encouraged the Secretariat to work tirelessly to ensure that the representation of developing countries was improved. The employment of greater numbers of women in professional posts should also continue to receive special attention.

49. Monsignor MAMBERTI (Holy See) said that, in his Angelus address on 29 July 2007, Pope Benedict XVI had recalled the important fiftieth anniversary of the Agency with the following words:

> "Precisely today, in fact, is the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Statute of the Agency, instituted with the mandate to 'accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.'
>
> "The Holy See, fully approving the goals of this Organization, has been a member of it since its founding and continues to support its activity.
>
> "The epochal changes that have occurred in the last 50 years demonstrate how, in the difficult crossroads in which humanity finds itself, the commitment to encourage non-proliferation of nuclear arms, to promote a progressive and agreed-upon nuclear disarmament and to support the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology for authentic development, respecting the environment and ever mindful of the most disadvantaged populations, is always more present and urgent.

> "I therefore hope that the efforts of those who work with determination to bring about these three objectives may be achieved, with the goal that 'the resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.'
>
> "It is also good on this occasion to repeat how: 'In place of ... the arms race, there must be substituted a common effort to mobilize resources toward objectives of moral, cultural and economic development, redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values.'
>
> "Again we entrust to the intercession of Mary Most Holy our prayer for peace, in particular so that scientific knowledge and technology are always applied with a sense of responsibility and for the common good, in full respect for international rights ..."

50. His words were an exhortation to the entire international community to commit itself seriously in order to achieve, with effectiveness, three objectives that were intimately linked, namely: the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and the peaceful and secure use of nuclear technology.

51. All peaceful uses of nuclear technology must be guided by two principles: they must be respectful of the environment and they must be ever mindful of the most disadvantaged populations. There were many benefits to be gained from the use of nuclear technology in such vital areas as food security and, above all, medicine. The work that the Agency carrying out through its technical cooperation programme, and in particular PACT, could not but receive strong support from the Holy See. Such activities were to be read within a wider moral context, in view of their repercussions not only for present generations but also for future ones. Finances allotted for such activities were seen as investments in the future of humanity, a future which, in the words of the Pope, might be capable of applying scientific and technical knowledge with a sense of responsibility and for the common good, while fully respecting international law. Concerted efforts should be made by all to encourage the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote a progressive and agreed nuclear disarmament.

52. Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament were interdependent and mutually reinforcing; and their transparent and responsible implementation represented one of the principal instruments, not only in the fight against nuclear terrorism, but also in the concrete realization of a culture of life and of peace capable of promoting effectively the integral development of peoples. Those objectives were moral imperatives; they were also politically possible.

53. Since its inception, the Agency had consolidated and strengthened the three pillars that formed the basis of its mandate; it had promoted the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies through research and technical cooperation, fostered nuclear safety and security through the elaboration and implementation of an effective, world-wide security regime based on conventions, standards and assistance to Member States, and performed verification activities. During the last half century, some difficulties had obviously arisen due to the complexity of the nuclear issue. Nuclear technology developed rapidly and dramatically, giving rise to continuously evolving difficulties, which represented major challenges for the near future. He drew attention in that regard to the black market for nuclear material, which also involved non-State actors, to the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, and to the difficulties faced in implementing the entire non-proliferation regime itself.

54. Such challenges could be seriously faced only by cultivating a culture of peace founded on the primacy of law and respect for human life. A multilateral approach, permeated by dialogue and honesty, as well as by responsible cooperation among all parties within the international community, must be reinforced as the best way to ensure that a future of peace for everyone was found not only in international accords on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also in a determined commitment to seek their reduction and definitive dismantling. Such a multilateral approach must be

marked by the development of a new paradigm of collective security, in which each country recognized the clear limits of recourse to nuclear weapons for its own security.

55. Humanity was at a difficult crossroads, characterized by ever-increasing interdependence involving economic, political, social and other factors. The use of force no longer represented a sustainable, long-term solution: it nourished a reciprocal diffidence and used enormous resources in a near-sighted way. The temptation to confront new situations with old systems must be avoided.

56. As the Pope had stated, it was necessary to redefine the priorities and hierarchies of values with a view to engaging in a common effort to mobilize resources in order to achieve moral, cultural and economic development. In order to promote such an approach, efforts must be made to encourage serious multilateralism based on a renewed collective sense of security, which could build a real climate of peace and trust, and which recognized that development, solidarity and justice were none other than the true name for a lasting peace.

6. Arrangements for the Conference

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

57. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the agenda for the current session consist of all the items on the provisional agenda set forth in document GC(51)/1 with the exception of item 22, as there were no vacancies on the Agency's Staff Pension Committee. It had also recommended that the agenda consist of all the items on the supplementary list of items for inclusion in the agenda contained in document GC(51)/20. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion, the Committee had recommended that the items listed in documents GC(51)/1 and GC(51)/20 be taken up for discussion as indicated in those documents. It had also recommended that the order of items be as set out in those documents.

58. Mr. ZARKA (Israel) said that, regrettably some States had again presented an agenda item on the so-called Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat. Israel had chosen not to challenge the adoption of the agenda in order not to politicize further the meeting.

59. There had been many alarming proliferation developments in recent years in the Middle East; none of them had involved Israel, but all of them had challenged its security. The developments demonstrated the alarming attitude of some regional States to their international commitments in the nuclear domain. There was no basis for the agenda item, and Israel's policy concerning the implications of the item remained unchanged.

60. The General Committee's recommendations were accepted.

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

61. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the Conference set Friday, 21 September 2007 as the closing date of the fifty-first regular session and Monday, 29 September 2008 as the opening date of the fifty-second regular session, which would be held in Vienna.

62. The General Committee's recommendation was accepted.

– Restoration of voting rights

63. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee, which had had before it requests from the Dominican Republic, Georgia and Moldova for the restoration of their voting rights, had postponed consideration of the requests, and of any other such requests received, until its following meeting.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2006 (resumed) (GC(51)/5)

64. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) congratulated the new Member States, Bahrain, Burundi, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo and Nepal, on their membership of the Agency. Nuclear science and technology had made enormous strides over the fifty years of the Agency's existence, with advances in medical diagnostics and cancer treatment, basic scientific research, industry and agriculture, and could be expected to advance even more rapidly in future.

65. The world's poorest countries faced hunger, chronic poverty, killer diseases, poor access to sanitation and safe drinking water and a lack of modern sources of energy. Many developing countries in Asia and Africa, like his own, had vulnerable economies characterized by extremely high population density, a low resource base and a high incidence of natural disasters that had adverse implications for long-term savings, investment and economic growth. Bangladesh was also facing new development challenges in the context of globalization. His Government's policy emphasized poverty reduction and social development, but these presupposed a reliable supply of energy and electricity.

66. The ongoing global energy crisis was already having a telling effect on the development endeavours of developed and developing countries alike, particularly in those countries that had few energy resources of their own. If the very low per capita energy consumption of the developing countries were to increase even modestly, the impact on both the availability and the price of fossil fuels would be enormous. Bangladesh had limited energy resources of its own, and per capita consumption of energy and electricity was currently among the lowest in the world. 'Clean' nuclear technology, which posed a much lower threat to the environment than earlier technologies, provided a practical solution to meet the country's increasing demand for energy. He called upon the Agency to play a more proactive role in helping developing countries to introduce nuclear power into their energy mix.

67. Qualified human resources were essential for the safety, security, reliability and successful implementation of any nuclear power project. The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission maintained a core team of dedicated scientists, engineers and technical staff, but it would need to be increased as the nuclear power plant programme expanded, despite the existing budgetary constraints. Another major challenge to the construction of nuclear power plants in the developing countries was financing, since such projects were very capital-intensive. Bangladesh hoped to obtain financing through foreign-aid programmes, 'soft' loans from the World Bank, or other innovative financing schemes. He called upon the Agency to use its influence with the World Bank and UNDP to ensure that nuclear power, being a 'clean' technology, was included in their sustainable environment management projects. The Agency should make every effort to minimize the barriers to the construction of nuclear power plants in developing countries, and he hoped that the Agency's activities to promote innovative financing options would provide assistance in that regard. The international

treaties and conventions which the Agency enforced helped to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy and secure the world for future generations.

68. The Agency could make a significant contribution to the fight against cancer in developing countries. His Government was setting up a positron emission tomography and computed tomography facility, and he gratefully acknowledged the technical cooperation that Bangladesh had received in setting up nuclear medicine and low-dose radiotherapy facilities for cancer diagnosis and treatment. However, more technical assistance was needed to provide safe and effective radiotherapy services. He likewise acknowledged the Agency's support for the assessment of underground water aquifers, intended to combat the acute problem of contamination of groundwater with arsenic. Nuclear technology had the potential to address some of the problems caused by a rising world population and the increasing shortage of clean drinking water.

69. Bangladesh was fully committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Its nuclear energy programme was transparent, and it had signed all relevant international non-proliferation and verification instruments. His Government had intensified its activities in nuclear safety and radiation control. The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission performed its nuclear regulatory activities in accordance with the country's nuclear safety charter, which laid out the philosophy of a nuclear safety culture. He called upon the Agency for assistance in the establishment of an effective and independent regulatory body.

70. He expressed his appreciation of the assistance provided by the Agency with regard to research and development in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially human resource development and project-oriented technical assistance. He hoped that such support would continue.

71. Bangladesh was active in various RCA projects, including collaborative research programmes. They were very effective because they gave countries the opportunity to share experiences within a region and should be expanded. The scope of the project concerning energy and nuclear power should be enhanced. Programmes on the application of nuclear techniques in industry, medicine, agriculture and other sectors would help the RCA countries to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

72. A vision for the next fifty years of the Agency should be formulated on the basis of the successes and experiences of the first fifty years. One of its major objectives should be to seek to achieve parity between the rich and poor, developed and developing nations, North and South, and East and West.

73. Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland) said that Poland, as a founding member of the Agency, was particularly proud of the creation of the organization and of the activities carried out over the past half century in order to implement the concept of "Atoms for peace". Those activities had been well balanced and reflected the important role played by the Agency in the areas of verification, safety and security and promotion of nuclear technology.

74. The NPT played a vital role in maintaining the global non-proliferation regime. It was regrettable that, at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, States Parties had been unable to agree on ways to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty. Given the positive outcome of the first Preparatory Committee meeting, Poland hoped that it would be possible to adopt a consensus document at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

75. The universal adoption and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements, and additional protocols was a prerequisite for a credible and effective safeguards system. Following its decision to accede to the European Union, Poland had, with effect from 1 March 2007, replaced its bilateral safeguards agreement and additional protocol by the trilateral safeguards agreement and additional protocol that was obligatory for European Union Member States. Poland called on those

countries that had not yet done so to join the Agency's safeguards system without delay. States with SQPs should also conclude an exchange of letters with the Director General to reinforce the safeguards system. He hoped that, the fifth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty being held in September 2007 would serve to bring forward the entry into force of the instrument, thereby strengthening nuclear non-proliferation worldwide. Poland was one of the 44 States whose ratification was required for the Treaty to enter into force, and had ratified the Treaty in 1999.

76. Poland continued to support fully the Agency's activities aimed at protecting the world from nuclear terrorism. A valuable instrument in support of those efforts was the CPPNM, as amended in 2005 to facilitate wider and more universal application of its provisions. Poland had completed the procedures for the ratification of the amendment to the Convention in 2007 and called on other States to follow suit.

77. In 2006, Poland had decided to join the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, and had already returned all unirradiated nuclear material of Russian origin to the Russian Federation. The core of Poland's nuclear research reactor was currently being converted to LEU. Plans had also been made for spent fuel of Russian origin to be repatriated to the Russian Federation; however implementation had been delayed for administrative reasons. Poland followed closely the various international proposals for formulating multilateral conditions of access to nuclear fuel-related activities.

78. Poland was pleased to note that the number of States signing the Nuclear Safety Convention and the Joint Convention continued to increase. The forthcoming fourth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nuclear Safety Convention scheduled to be held in April 2008 was likely to produce outcomes comparable to those achieved in the past. Poland's report for the meeting had been prepared and would be submitted on time.

79. Poland welcomed the improved quality of the revised nuclear safety standards, international action plans and codes of conduct, particular those relating to the safety and security of radiation sources and the safety of research reactors. Those documents played a significant role in minimizing the risks posed by insufficient control of radioactive sources or potential malicious acts against research reactors.

80. In view of plans to introduce nuclear power in the future, Poland was exploring possibilities of cooperation with Lithuania and other countries in the region and had joined the GNEP. His country was interested in progress in the development of new nuclear technology and in the improvement of attendant safety programmes. In that connection, he stressed the importance of the Agency's involvement in the INPRO project and its membership of the GIF. Its role in promoting nuclear technology could not be overestimated, and Agency initiatives relating to hydrology, human health and nutrition should be supported. The results achieved in the framework of PACT, in particular, were impressive and a good example of partnership between the Agency and other relevant parties. Poland's commitment to that Programme had been demonstrated by the extrabudgetary payments it had made in 2006; similar action was being considered for 2007.

81. His country also supported the Agency's cooperation with other organizations, including collaboration in basic sciences, particularly in view of the need for better management of nuclear knowledge. The Agency had an important role to play in that regard, and should intensify its efforts to ensure the availability of the qualified manpower needed to sustain the current level of scientific and engineering activities relating to nuclear technology. It should also organize relevant studies and other educational activities in Member States. In view of the Agency's limited financial resources, and given the real interest on the part of the nuclear industry in educational activities, he suggested that

extrabudgetary funds might be made available. His country fully supported all relevant initiatives to address the issue.

82. The technical cooperation programme had always been an integral component of the Agency's statutory mandate. Poland was a good example of a country that had moved away from being a mere recipient to becoming a real partner and an important donor. Together with other European Union Member States, Poland contributed to TCDC initiatives, and Polish public institutions participated actively in a range of regional projects, offering their knowledge and expertise to other Member States.

83. Assured financing was crucial to the implementation of the Agency's technical cooperation activities. All Member States, both donors and recipients, should show their commitment to the programme by pledging and paying on time and in full their shares of the TCF target and their NPCs. His country strongly supported the application of the due account principle, and was pleased to report that Poland had already prepared to pledge and pay its share of the target.

84. Mr. CRAXI (Italy) underlined his country's appreciation for the important role played by the Agency throughout its fifty years of existence. In undertaking its institutional tasks the Agency had become an indispensable reference point for international cooperation on the safe and peaceful use of atomic energy, and played an irreplaceable role in the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Italy supported all the activities undertaken by the Agency, and was ready to assume the responsibilities associated with membership of the Board of Governors.

85. The NPT constituted the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and was an essential basis for nuclear disarmament. The Treaty underpinned the safeguards system, and its collapse would leave a void and could result in a shift away from a multilateral, universal system to a regionally disparate one. Parallel progress must be made all three pillars of the Treaty through the strengthening of safeguards, achievement of disarmament commitments, and recognition of the responsibilities associated with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

86. Italy believed that any expansion of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes should be accompanied by careful efforts to prevent proliferation as a result of the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies. Italy was following with interest the idea of establishing a new framework concerning multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, and encouraged the Secretariat to pursue the matter seriously.

87. Practical steps should be taken in order to relaunch the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The additional protocol should be applied universally and should, together with safeguards agreements, become the standard for Agency verification. It should also be a prerequisite in order to obtain nuclear materials and technologies. There should be a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, and Italy looked forward to the entry into force of the CTBT — an important element of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Italy would support the commencement of negotiations towards the adoption of a fissile material cut-off treaty, in which the Agency could play an important role. Such a treaty would constitute a significant step towards nuclear disarmament, an obstacle to nuclear terrorism, and would help to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

88. Italy remained convinced that the safeguards system constituted the most effective instrument for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular since a multilateral approach was essential to increase the credibility of non-proliferation. It was vital to be able to verify compliance with the multilateral norms in force and to detect violations.

89. His country welcomed the efforts of the Director General and the verification activities of Agency inspectors, particularly in Iran and the DPRK. Italy trusted that the work plan for the clarification of outstanding issues agreed with Iran would be applied in its entirety and without delay.

90. New forms of international cooperation such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the G8 Global Partnership were playing a major role in combating nuclear proliferation and terrorism. Italy recognized the need to strengthen measures to prevent the risk of nuclear terrorism in particular.

91. Each country needed to accord top priority to nuclear safety. Italy attached great importance to the development of a global nuclear safety regime based on international instruments including conventions, which were being adopted by an increasing number of Member States, and the Agency's safety standards series. The main activities to be addressed at national level in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy related to the deactivation and dismantling of existing nuclear facilities, and radioactive waste and spent fuel management. Italy supported the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. From 2001 to 2006, the Italian Government had invested considerably in maintaining and improving safety and security at facilities in the process of being decommissioned, and would continue to do so for the next 30 months. Italy was committed to the highest international standards of safety and security.

92. In the field of nuclear technology, Italy supported the strengthening of international cooperation and participation in new programmes and projects at both European and international levels. Italy's national research agencies, universities and industries participated in several European framework projects devoted to nuclear security, innovative nuclear systems and advanced fuel cycles. It also participated in bilateral agreements, and a national research and development programme concerning the national electricity system had been financed for three years by the Ministry of Economic Development.

93. Italy was an active supporter of the Agency's technical cooperation activities and paid its contributions to the TCF in full and on time. It also provided significant extrabudgetary resources, and Italy was now the second largest donor for programmes of particular interest such as those on improving radiotherapy techniques for cancer treatment and the use of isotope techniques in connection with nutrition in Africa.

94. Italy's universities and health institutions had been working with the Agency in the provision of technical assistance, in particular in the field of nuclear medicine, through the organization of numerous scientific visits and fellowships. Moreover, through UNESCO, Italy contributed 85% of the budget of the ICTP whose activities and programmes aimed at promoting international cooperation among scientists from all countries. The ICTP was contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development goals, and had trained more than 100 000 researchers from more than 100 countries over the previous forty years.

95. Mr. ALI (Pakistan) said that the Agency enjoyed tremendous respect for the role it played in introducing the benefits of nuclear energy into power generation, medicine, agriculture, hydrology, geology, industry, the environment and basic sciences. Pakistan was one of the top beneficiaries of the Agency's technical and cooperation programme, and was grateful to the Department of Technical Cooperation for its assistance. Pakistan, in its turn, had shared its experiences, provided the services of experts and offered training and work experience to help other countries.

96. Nuclear power provided the secure energy supply required for industrial development and was a 'clean' technology, which helped to counter the threat of climate change. Developing countries, which

faced a major expansion in their demand for energy, should make nuclear energy a more important element in their energy mix, but they could not do so without the support of the industrialized nations. At present, nuclear energy produced 8800 MW of Pakistan's annual energy output, which was only 4.5% of the country's projected energy requirements for the year 2030. His Government hoped for international assistance in its plans to expand power generation to meet the demands of a growing economy.

97. Pakistan welcomed the recent initiatives on assurances of supply, and was studying the various options with great interest. Any mechanism must be completely trustworthy and should encourage the expansion of nuclear power generation through the assured supply of nuclear fuel and other related services in a non-discriminatory manner. Pakistan was building a uranium conversion and enrichment facility to provide fuel for its nuclear power plants, which it intended to place under Agency safeguards.

98. Pakistan's safeguards record had remained immaculate in recent decades. A comprehensive export control act had been adopted to keep track of materials, goods, technologies and equipment related to nuclear and biological weapons and their delivery systems. An oversight board had also been established to monitor the implementation of export controls, including those imposed by the NSG and other international bodies.

99. Pakistan's first nuclear power plant, KANUPP, had been in operation since 1972. Its scheduled operational life had been extended by 15 years thanks to extensive refurbishment and safety upgrading. A demonstration desalination facility at the KANUPP plant was now expected to open in 2008. The country's second nuclear power plant, CHASNUPP, was operating satisfactorily; a second unit was being constructed on the same site, and Pakistan appreciated the assistance provided by the Chinese Government.

100. Pakistan's nuclear facilities had an excellent safety record, thanks in part to the nuclear safety expertise of the Agency. However, continued international cooperation was essential if countries were to have access to the equipment they needed to meet the modern, higher standards of safety and reliability in nuclear facilities. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority had used the Agency's safety standards as a basis for its own national regulations governing nuclear installations. His Government greatly appreciated the valuable assistance it had received from the Agency in the area of nuclear safety and security.

101. Pakistan was committed to the use of nuclear science and technology for economic development. Its nuclear agriculture centres had developed 57 varieties of crops with high yields and high resistance to pests and diseases. The nuclear medicine and oncology centres operated by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission provided state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment facilities, and the first positron emission tomography facility was under construction. He expressed his appreciation for the extensive cooperation and assistance provided by the Agency in those areas.

102. The Agency was one of the most efficiently run United Nations organizations. Its statutory functions were both technically and scientifically challenging and therefore financially demanding. He supported the Director General's plan to establish a high-level panel of experts to consider options for financing the Agency's activities over the next decade, and hoped that the study would also consider the need for sufficient, assured and predictable funding for technical cooperation activities.

103. Mr. ALSUWAYIEL (Saudi Arabia) said that the Agency's record over the past first fifty years in encouraging peaceful and safe uses of nuclear energy and preventing its diversion to military uses had been impressive. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Agency and its Director General conveyed a strong message of support for their work on behalf of security and development.

104. Saudi Arabia strongly supported the Agency's activities aimed at promoting peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, nuclear power and the nuclear fuel cycle, food production, human health, water resources, management of the environment and industrial applications. It also supported the Agency's plans to preserve global nuclear safety and security and to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the technical cooperation programme played an effective role in raising living standards in Member States, improving government services and providing guidance for national development plans.

105. Saudi Arabia concurred with the view that development depended on the availability of modern reliable energy sources, and that current global energy shortages would become more acute. In view of the important role played by nuclear energy in electricity generation, many governments planned to use nuclear power to meet their current and future needs. It was therefore essential to address issues such as exorbitant costs, the safe processing and disposal of radioactive waste, and the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to reassure the general public of the safety of nuclear energy.

106. Verification of nuclear non-proliferation had become increasingly difficult as more and more countries implemented nuclear energy programmes, creating opportunities for diversion of materials used in the nuclear fuel cycle at the stages of uranium-235 enrichment and the reprocessing of spent fuel. Binding international treaties involving effective verification and the imposition of sanctions in the event of non-compliance were thus the only way of preventing proliferation.

107. Saudi Arabia supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and urged the international community to work seriously towards ridding the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction in order to strengthen regional and international peace and security. His country stressed the need to place nuclear facilities in countries of the Middle East region under Agency safeguards and urged all countries of the region to accede to the NPT.

108. Saudi Arabia agreed with the Director General's assessment of the changes that had occurred in the area of non-proliferation: the emergence of an extensive black market network engaged in he trafficking of nuclear material and equipment; the proliferation of nuclear weapons and sensitive nuclear technology in a large number of developing countries; and the faltering of the international community's nuclear disarmament efforts. His country believed, however, that the persistent reliance by some countries on nuclear weapons to guarantee their security might encourage others to seek a similar deterrent. Eight or nine countries were now known to possess 27 000 nuclear warheads. They posed a threat to which the Middle East was also exposed, Israel having recently announced the well-known fact that it possessed nuclear weapons.

109. The international community must work jointly to build a conventional security system that did not depend on nuclear weapons. Such a system would be based on the following steps: prevention of nuclear or radioactive material from falling into the hands of extremist groups; control of productive processes involving nuclear material that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons; and acceleration of nuclear disarmament.

110. Saudi Arabia commended the Agency's pioneering humanitarian work under PACT and had responded to the Agency's call for the establishment of a voluntary fund for the purpose. It had also responded to the call for donations to the project to make the Agency's documents in its official languages available in electronic form, providing the equivalent of 10% of the capital required for the project.

111. In additional to bilateral technical cooperation projects with the Agency involving research and training in medical, agricultural, industrial and water resources management, Saudi Arabia participated in regional technical cooperation projects with the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, including joint assessment of power generation plans for the coming decades, the feasibility of the

nuclear power option for seawater desalination, other uses of nuclear technology for sustainable development, improvement of the regulatory and legislative structure for radiation protection and safety, and enhancement of technological expertise in the areas of nuclear security and radiation protection.

112. He assured the Arab Member States that had supported Saudi Arabia's candidacy for membership of the Board of Governors for the forthcoming term that it would discharge its responsibilities with due diligence.

113. Ms. KOZMIDIS LUBURIC (Serbia), having noted that Serbia associated itself fully with the statement of the European Union, said that Serbia had, despite many structural, political and economic changes over the past fifteen years, remained a member of the Agency, in keeping with its traditional commitment to the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

114. Serbia supported the Agency's vital activities in the area of nuclear and radiation safety. Her Government's policy was to ensure that nuclear energy respected the environment and benefited present and future generations. Serbia was strongly committed to strengthening further its national nuclear system and bringing it into line with international safety standards and practices, and improving its nuclear statutory and regulatory infrastructure, inter alia by strengthening national capacities and human resources. Her Government was working to ensure that the decommissioning of the research reactor at the Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences and other activities were carried out under the strictest possible conditions of radiation control and safety. Serbia supported the Agency's efforts to improve international safety standards, recommendations and relevant international legal and political instruments.

115. Her Government attached great importance to nuclear security issues and was committed to pursuing international cooperation to strengthen national nuclear security systems and mechanisms. With the assistance of the Agency and other international actors, Serbia was making ongoing progress in upgrading its ability to combat illicit trafficking and improving its national physical protection system for gaining control over orphan sources. Serbia had signed the amendments to the CPPNM in June 2005 and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in September 2005, and it had been one of the first countries to ratify the latter, in July 2006. Serbia supported all Agency initiatives aimed at strengthening links and joint initiatives among States to prevent potential acts of terrorism. It fully endorsed initiatives such as the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001), 1540 (2004) and others aimed at enhancing the mechanisms and capabilities of countries in combating nuclear terrorism. Serbia also supported efforts to strengthen the NSF, joint actions by the Agency and the European Union, and was working to bring national legislation into line with the legal provisions of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

116. In 2002, with the assistance of the Agency, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, Serbia had removed fresh nuclear fuel from the research reactor at the Vinča Institute, and shipped it to its country of origin, the Russian Federation. The decommissioning of the reactor was a goal to which her Government was strongly committed and for which further assistance from the Agency and the international community was indispensable.

117. Serbia would continue to support the Agency's programme on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of verification measures and efforts to develop integrated safeguards in accordance with the NPT, to which Serbia had been a party since the beginning. Her delegation reaffirmed Serbia's intention to sign an additional protocol as soon as the technical, administrative and human-resources capacity had been established.

118. Serbia strongly supported the further improvement of technical cooperation. Her delegation thanked the Department of Technical Cooperation, for its dedicated efforts to enhance cooperation with Member States in a variety of fields. Serbia appreciated the assistance received in making nuclear energy safe and secure. The Agency's support was indispensable for attaining important national and international goals, in particular for countries like Serbia, which were upgrading and improving their mechanisms in various areas. It was to be hoped that the Agency would continue to increase its efforts in that regard. A new, updated CPF for Serbia was in the final phase of preparation, and would also help to promote cooperation.

119. As in the past, Serbia had met all its financial obligations to the Agency, and would continue to do so in the future.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.