IAEA
Atoms for Peace

General Conference

GC(55)/OR.5
Issued: March 2012

General Distribution
Original: English

Fifty-fifth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Fifth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 21 September 2011, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr POTTS (Australia)
Later: Mr BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation)

Contents

[1] GC(55)/25.

Contents (continued)

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(55)/INF/9/Rev.1.

Abbreviations used in this record:

ARASIA	Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EPREV	Emergency Preparedness Review
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HEU	high-enriched uranium
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ISSAS	IAEA SSAC Advisory Service
LEU	low-enriched uranium
New START	New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PHWR	pressurized heavy water reactor
QUATRO	Quality Assurance Team for Radiation Oncology

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation of Water Moderated Reactors Peer Review Service
SSAC	State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2010 (continued) (GC(55)/2)

1. Mr KOVÁCS (Hungary) expressed his country's support for the international conference on the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East to be held in 2012. He commended the Director General for convening a forum on that subject in November 2011, with a special focus on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and looked forward to constructive consultations at the forum.

2. He noted that, at the Fifth Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, all Hungarian nuclear installations had been found to be operating safely. His country called on all Member States that had not done so to join that Convention. As a Contracting Party to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Hungary was looking forward to a fruitful review meeting of that Convention in 2012. His country attached great importance to efforts to improve interaction and ensure knowledge transfer and continuity between review meetings.

3. He expressed sympathy to the Japanese people following the earthquake and tsunami they had experienced. The subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had necessitated an immediate safety reassessment of European reactors. The nuclear power plant operator in Hungary had submitted its first progress report to the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority and the regulatory body had forwarded its opinion on the current status of the targeted safety reassessment to the European Union. The country had already made significant efforts to reshape its emergency preparedness system prior to the accident by revising the organizational structure of its emergency responders and the relevant regulations.

4. Hungary was in the process of organizing the second European Training Course on Nuclear Emergency Management with the support of the European Union. It had also successfully hosted an INEX-4 emergency preparedness exercise simulating the explosion of a dirty bomb in a heavy traffic environment. The nuclear power plant operator had made significant progress in its preparations for managing beyond design basis accidents, including the capability to provide external cooling of the reactor pressure vessel. A guide was also being drawn up in that regard.

5. The above-surface part of the national radioactive waste repository near the village of Bátaapáti was complete and the first underground disposal chambers were under construction. The interim storage facility for spent fuel at the Paks nuclear power plant was being extended and the new modules would be in operation by the end of 2012.

6. To provide a clear legal framework for the commissioning of new units and operation of the Paks nuclear power plant, the Hungarian Parliament had approved the modification of the Act on Atomic Energy, which incorporated the safety-related reference levels elaborated and issued by the Western European Nuclear Regulators' Association. The Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority had also revised the national nuclear safety code.

7. The operator of the Paks nuclear power plant had submitted a plan for lifetime extension which had been approved by the regulatory body and was now being implemented, taking into account the suggestions made. The Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority was expected to assess the application

and issue a licence for the extension of the service life of Unit 1 by the end of 2012, with the service life extension for the other three units coming in subsequent years.

8. The invitation of Hungarian experts to participate in several Agency missions — including an IRRS mission to Korea, an IPPAS mission to Cuba, a fact-finding mission to Japan and an EPREV mission to Latvia — was an acknowledgement of the country's nuclear expertise. Hungary had also hosted a QUATRO mission to the National Institute of Oncology to follow up on the findings of the 2005 audit, and a SALTO mission to the nuclear power plant.

9. During its presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2011, Hungary had initiated a joint meeting of the EU Energy Council and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group following the Fukushima accident, at which the parties had concluded that stress tests needed to be performed on all nuclear power reactors in the European Union.

10. Hungary had played a leading role in formulating European Council Directive 2011/70/EURATOM establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. That directive would allow EU member States to address their radioactive waste and spent fuel management challenges in a harmonized way and in accordance with Agency safety standards.

11. In 2011, Hungary had hosted the European Safeguards Research and Development Association annual meeting with over 250 participants. The large number of participants showed the dedication of European countries to maintaining and improving the safeguards regime through research and development. His country continued to provide safeguards inspection training each year and supported Agency safeguards through development of innovative methods.

12. Hungary attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities. As the extraordinary three-year cycle drew to an end, it had become clear that three years was too long for planning technical cooperation activities in advance. In his country's view, planning meetings for regional projects during that cycle had been a waste of resources. The new strategy for the technical cooperation programme in the Europe region promoted cooperation between the Secretariat and Member States, whereby each participant could contribute to the formulation of the programme and benefit from the help of the Agency and fellow Member States. He commended the Agency for having the courage to adopt such a new approach. Hungary attached great importance to the successful implementation of the Peaceful Uses Initiative and was considering taking an active part.

13. Following the Fukushima accident, the Agency had swung into action, dispatching radiation protection experts to Japan, sending a fact-finding mission to the nuclear power plant, publishing the mission report, convening a ministerial conference in Vienna and drafting an action plan which reflected the most important lessons to be learned from the accident. Although the process was far from over, the Agency's immediate response had been appropriate and the Secretariat was taking the right steps to enhance safety at nuclear installations.

14. The Fukushima accident had raised widespread concerns over the use of nuclear energy for power generation. Several countries were phasing out their nuclear power plants, while others had reconsidered their plans to embark on nuclear power. Having assessed the pros and cons of using nuclear technology for energy production, Hungary had concluded that it could not meet its electricity needs without it. His country was therefore committed to extending the service life of the Paks nuclear power plant and would continue preparations to build new units at that site, with the professional support of the Agency.

15. Mr OSMAN (Bangladesh) said that the preceding year had been a busy and successful one for the Agency and that the eradication of rinderpest in particular had been an historic accomplishment.

16. Bangladesh had a longstanding, firm commitment to comprehensive disarmament and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. His country therefore welcomed the decision by the Agency's General Conference to hold a forum in Vienna in November 2011 on the experience of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and confidence-building measures with a view to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and hoped that it would facilitate early establishment of such a zone.

17. The accident in Fukushima, which had been triggered by forces of nature, had been unprecedented. He expressed profound sympathy to the people and Government of Japan and admiration for their resilience in overcoming that catastrophe. The accident had shown that there was no place for complacency when it came to nuclear safety and security. He praised the Agency for its timely actions and successful handling of the accident and commended the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety for its adoption of the first ever action plan on nuclear safety, which would provide better guidance to further strengthen nuclear safety. He thanked the Director General for his personal initiatives to support the Government of Japan in response to the nuclear crisis and for his timely convening of the Ministerial Conference.

18. He noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, along with other Heads of State and Government, would be attending a meeting under United Nations auspices in New York the next day to discuss strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear disaster risk preparedness. His Government also hoped that the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Seoul and the Agency's proposed nuclear safety conference to be held in Japan in 2012 would further strengthen the nuclear safety and security regimes.

19. Bangladesh called upon all vendor countries and the Agency to adopt special programmes for developing countries and especially for the least developed countries, all of which were lacking in energy resources and for which nuclear power might prove to be the most viable alternative.

20. Development and energy were inseparable, since in order to eradicate poverty and hunger, ensure food security, energy security and environmental sustainability, fight killer diseases and, above all, ensure a decent quality of life for people, a reliable supply of energy was required. Energy was critical for human progress, and nuclear energy was recognized as the world's principal source of non-polluting, carbon-free energy.

21. The current global energy crisis, and particularly the dependence on fossil fuel, had already dealt a major blow to the development efforts of developed and developing countries alike, especially in countries like Bangladesh which were virtually without indigenous energy resources. The rapid depletion of fossil fuel resources and global warming owing to greenhouse gases had increased global recognition of the need for renewable and non-carbon energy, and in that regard nuclear energy took on particular significance.

22. Under the Constitution of Bangladesh it was the responsibility of the State to ensure the food, health and energy security of its people, which was particularly difficult in a small country with an enormous population and no major source of energy. Nuclear power was viewed as the only cost-effective and environmentally friendly energy solution. Bangladesh was already benefiting from the use of nuclear technology in the development of saline-resistant high-yielding varieties of rice and other agricultural applications, and in the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, including cancer. His Government had always valued cooperation with the Agency in its research and development efforts.

23. Bangladesh had made significant socio-economic progress since independence but was still unable to realize its full growth potential owing to inadequate infrastructure and lack of energy sources. The Government was pursuing a vision of a "digital Bangladesh" with the aim of

transforming Bangladesh into a knowledge-based middle-income country by 2021. To provide the energy required in order to achieve "Vision 2021" and ensure energy security it was important for the country to include nuclear energy in its energy mix. To that end, it was committed to continuing its nuclear energy programme in the post-Fukushima era and had been working on construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant with the support of the Russian Federation.

24. Construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant had been a dream of the nation's founder, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Following his death in 1975 those plans had been abandoned, but the current Prime Minister had revived them and the Government was committed to building the plant as soon as possible. The necessary surveys and investigations had already been initiated, Agency support to finalize the site evaluation report was being sought and an agreement with the Russian Federation for construction of the project was near to being signed. His country would also seek Agency assistance in developing its national capability to make the necessary commercial, financial and technical assessments in connection with the plant. It also attached great importance to collaboration with the Agency in establishing a regulatory body to oversee and ensure nuclear safety and security in all activities related to the country's nuclear power programme.

25. Bangladesh was giving top priority to radiation protection and nuclear safety and security in implementing its nuclear power plant project. It was committed to strengthening the independence and effectiveness of national authorities responsible for regulating and overseeing the safety and physical protection of nuclear materials and installations, safeguards and import and export control, the State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material, transport and waste safety, transport of radioactive materials and emergency preparedness and response.

26. Bangladesh was relying on the Agency's and other internationally recognized codes, guidelines and standards for safety and would make them mandatory for all phases of the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the nuclear power plant.

27. The Agency played a pivotal role in coordinating efforts to strengthen global nuclear safety, promoting a global culture of safety and providing expertise and advice. Bangladesh expected that enhanced international and regional cooperation would ensure the highest level of nuclear safety based on Agency safety requirements.

28. With only three significant accidents in its history, nuclear power could not be characterized as unsafe and unreliable. Nuclear technology had served humanity faithfully from the start and would continue to do so. Rather than allow fear of the risks of nuclear technology to undermine its contributions, the world must move fearlessly forward. Immediate and proactive measures must be taken to address Member States' concerns regarding safety and security, which had always been paramount. Past nuclear accidents clearly underscored the importance of achieving universal adherence to and effective implementation of the relevant international instruments, and of improving the international legal framework for nuclear safety.

29. His country recognized the need for a stronger system of national, regional and international emergency preparedness and response along with closer cooperation among national regulatory authorities and relevant national and international organizations. To make that possible, it was essential to increase information sharing, transparency and exchange of best practices among Agency Member States in cases of nuclear emergencies and further promote and expand the scope of the Agency's response to such emergencies. The Agency might play a more vital role in the event of a nuclear emergency through establishment of an institutional structure under the IAEA domain.

30. Bangladesh had been an active member of the RCA since its inception and viewed it as a powerful tool for promoting and coordinating research and development aimed at solving national problems utilizing the resources available within the Asia-Pacific region. It looked forward to RCA's

continued contribution to the strengthening of regional capabilities and expertise in such areas as health, agriculture, industry, environment, research reactors, radioactive waste management and radiation protection.

31. Bangladesh hoped that the outcome of the current General Conference session would help shape the future programmes of the Agency and of Member States so that the people of the world would be the ultimate beneficiaries of the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Countries like Bangladesh had long endured many economic hardships, but they could no longer afford to remain in energy poverty, since that would endanger all progress made to date towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Those who would lead their countries had to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of their peoples, and strong and sustained political leadership was needed in order to secure for those peoples the benefits of nuclear energy.

32. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that her country had followed closely the development of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, with deepest sympathy for the people in the affected area, and had been ready to provide any assistance needed. The international community had been reminded, 25 years after the Chernobyl disaster, that it must never slacken its efforts to maintain and strengthen the global nuclear safety regime. Though different in nature, both accidents had clearly demonstrated the need for efficient international cooperation, effective sharing of information, knowledge and experience, and transparent communication among all parties concerned. The Fukushima accident had provided an opportunity to reinvigorate efforts to improve the international framework for nuclear and radiation safety and emergency preparedness and response. The Czech Republic was prepared to contribute to all such endeavours led by the Agency and other relevant international organizations. The first step should be to ensure implementation of existing international legal instruments and norms and effective use of the Agency's nuclear safety services. A thorough analysis of the Fukushima accident — including its root causes and an evaluation of individual failures — was required before identifying possible gaps in the existing nuclear safety framework and formulating concrete and realistic measures to be taken. She noted that the Agency's Action Plan on Nuclear Safety would be updated as the accident was analysed further. The action plan would need the full support and cooperation of all Member States in order to succeed.

33. The Czech Republic honoured its obligations and responsibilities associated with the use of nuclear power. As a contracting party to all relevant safety conventions, it was strongly committed to fulfilling their objectives. On 30 December 2010, it had completed its ratification process of the amendment to the CPPNM.

34. All stakeholders in her country were committed to maintaining high levels of safety and making further improvements. To that end, the Czech Republic took advantage of Agency peer reviews for independent safety assessments on relevant topics and was eager to learn from the Fukushima accident. Efforts were also being made to assure the public that the country's nuclear power plants were being operated in a safe and reliable manner. That included carrying out stress tests to verify the safety of the plants in natural events even more extreme than those considered in their original designs. The results of the self-assessment were being reviewed by the State Office for Nuclear Safety and would be published in due course. According to the preliminary findings, no risks had been identified that would require the adoption of immediate measures. National nuclear regulators were the only fully competent bodies equipped with all the information and in-depth knowledge of the inspected facilities necessary in order to draw conclusions as to their overall safety level. Public acceptance of nuclear power would be essential for the new nuclear reactors planned to be built in the Czech Republic, and any lessons to be learned from the Fukushima accident would receive proper consideration.

35. The Czech Republic had also provided almost US $2 million since 1998 to help strengthen nuclear safety in other countries, mainly Ukraine and Armenia. Her Government had recently approved an extrabudgetary contribution of approximately $150 000 to the Peaceful Uses Initiative to help Armenia strengthen its regulatory framework and implement recommendations from the recent OSART mission to the Metsamor nuclear power plant.

36. Her country's nuclear safety related assistance had been implemented through the technical cooperation programme and through significant voluntary contributions to support other important areas in which the Agency was active, such as nuclear security, radiation protection and human health. The technical cooperation programme was a unique platform allowing interested countries at various levels of development to share experience, information and scientific and technical know-how. The Czech Republic was a net contributor to the programme, providing financial support, sharing expertise and hosting Agency activities. It endorsed all efforts by the Secretariat to make the programme even more effective, efficient and transparent.

37. Cognizant of the ever increasing importance of international cooperation in combating nuclear terrorism and the need to reinforce global nuclear security and non-proliferation, her country participated actively in relevant multilateral activities aimed at achieving the NPT's final objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

38. The Czech Republic had hosted the international conference entitled "The Prague Agenda — the Way Forward" in April 2011 in order to maintain the momentum of the major international nuclear disarmament and security events that had taken place there in 2009 and 2010. The conference had stimulated political and expert discussions on disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and nuclear security and had enabled participants to take stock of the progress made in implementing President Obama's Prague agenda. The Czech Republic was also involved in preparations for the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Seoul in 2012. Her country fully supported activities aimed at enhancing export controls for nuclear material, improving the safety and security of radioactive sources and strengthening the relevant international mechanisms and regimes.

39. Her country remained concerned over the serious challenges to the non-proliferation regime posed by Iran, the DPRK and Syria. It was not convinced that those countries were fulfilling all commitments and obligations regarding their nuclear programmes and it therefore called on them to comply with the relevant Agency and UN Security Council resolutions. The universal adoption and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols was essential for further endeavours in the field of nuclear non-proliferation.

40. The Agency's capacity in the area of safeguards needed further strengthening. Through its Member State Support Programme, her country contributed to increasing the effectiveness and operational capability of the Agency's safeguards system. The Czech Republic regularly provided training for new safeguards inspectors at its nuclear facilities, which it also made available for the testing of new Agency surveillance systems. In addition, the country offered its analytical services and expertise and supported other priority safeguards areas as its capacities and budgetary situation allowed.

41. Mr BANERJEE (India) expressed his country's condolences to the Japanese people for the twin natural disasters they had suffered and its appreciation of the efforts of the Japanese Government and people in dealing with the consequences.

42. The IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in Vienna, following soon after the Ministerial Seminar on Nuclear Safety in Paris, had reiterated the consensus that nuclear safety was a national responsibility. The unanimous adoption of the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference had

demonstrated the importance that Member States accorded to nuclear safety and to the role of the Agency in addressing that important issue.

43. Nuclear energy remained an important element in India's energy mix for sustaining rapid economic growth. The country remained firmly committed to its indigenous nuclear programme and was planning a major expansion of nuclear installed capacity to 20 000 MW(e) by 2020 with the aim of reaching about 60 000 MW(e) in the early 2030s. That accelerated additional capacity included the installation of large water cooled reactors under international cooperation and with full regard to safety, the environment and the livelihood of those living in the vicinity of the plants.

44. Immediately after the accident at Fukushima, India's Prime Minister had underlined that nuclear power plant safety was a high priority for the Government, which had taken a number of steps in that regard. A bill had been introduced in parliament to give the national safety regulatory authority statutory status. The results of the safety reviews mandated by the Government had been made public; several of the recommendations had already been implemented and a roadmap had been prepared for implementation of the rest. Further, a decision had been made to request an OSART and an IRRS mission.

45. In addition, the emergency response and preparedness measures in India's nuclear facilities had been strengthened. The National Disaster Management Authority had drawn up a holistic and integrated programme for the management of nuclear and radiological emergencies.

46. The substantial data available from the Fukushima and Chernobyl accidents should be taken into account in the establishment of new guidelines for new emergency response intervention limits.

47. As a party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and to the Assistance and Early Notification Conventions, India was looking forward to participating in their review to ensure effective implementation.

48. Turning to recent achievements with regard to India's nuclear power programme, he said that his country was a firm advocate of the adoption of a closed fuel cycle in order to extract maximum energy from its limited uranium resources and provide long-term energy security by utilizing its vast thorium resources.

49. Domestic installed nuclear power capacity had reached 4780 MW(e). The total number of reactors in operation was 20, including three new 220 MW(e) PHWRs which had been recently connected to the grid. India ranked sixth in the world in the number of nuclear power reactors in operation. Indian PHWRs had a very competitive capital cost and offered a very low unit energy tariff. To date, the nuclear power sector had registered over 345 reactor years of safe operation.

50. Nuclear power generation during the past year had shown an increase of about 40% compared with the previous year as a result of increased availability of fuel, both indigenous and imported. The average capacity factor for all reactors was over 80% and seven had exceeded 90%.

51. En-masse coolant channel replacement and en-masse feeder replacement had been completed in Unit 2 of the Narora atomic power station and Unit 1 of the Kakrapar atomic power station.

52. The construction work at two 1000 MW(e) light water reactors at Kudankulam being set up in technical cooperation with the Russian Federation was nearly complete. Unit 1 commissioning activities had reached an advanced stage and the hot run had been recently completed. Progress on Unit 2 was close behind.

53. Construction of the 500 MW(e) prototype fast breeder reactor was also at an advanced stage. The reactor vault was nearing completion, with all the major reactor equipment in place. Welding of

the reactor's top shield to the main vessel had commenced, as had installation of the steam generator and the secondary sodium pump.

54. Four indigenously designed 700 MW(e) PHWRs had been launched, two each at the existing sites of Kakrapar in Gujarat and Rawatbhata in Rajasthan, thus raising the number of reactors under construction to seven.

55. The fast breeder test reactor at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research had completed 25 years of successful operation in October 2010 and the process for its life extension up to the year 2030 was progressing well.

56. The test fuel sub-assembly for the prototype fast breeder reactor had been irradiated in the fast breeder test reactor, with a peak burnup of 112 GWd/t having been achieved as against the target of 100 GWd/t, and it was currently undergoing post-irradiation examination. A test loop called SADHANA had successfully demonstrated natural convection in sodium-to-air heat exchange for validating the prototype fast breeder reactor decay heat removal process. In the domain of fast reactor safety, a test facility for molten fuel-coolant interaction had been commissioned with a view to gaining understanding of severe accidents.

57. Detailed engineering design had been initiated for the advanced heavy water reactor so as to enable the start of construction in the 2012–2017 planning period.

58. As a founder member of INPRO, his country was pleased with the progress made under that project over the past decade.

59. With its broad experience in the entire range of nuclear power plant related activities, including the fuel cycle, India was in a position to export reactors, equipment, components and services. In particular, it possessed all the technologies and infrastructure relevant to small and medium sized PHWRs, which were a safe and cost-effective option for countries with small grids that were planning to start a nuclear power programme. India was therefore looking forward to exporting its proven small and medium sized reactors.

60. His country was self-sufficient with regard to heavy water, zirconium alloy components and other related materials and supplies for PHWRs. The Nuclear Fuel Complex at Hyderabad manufactured fuel assemblies for various reactor types, such as PHWRs, boiling water reactors and fast breeder reactors.

61. The recently opened uranium mine in Tumalapalle had the potential to be a major uranium resource, with reserves currently assessed at over 60 000 t. An indigenously developed alkali leaching process had been adopted for processing uranium ore from that mine.

62. The new reprocessing plant inaugurated at Tarapur had been working satisfactorily to its design capacity.

63. A high-flux research reactor planned for the new Bhabha Atomic Research Centre campus at Visakhapatnam was designed primarily to meet the large demand for high specific activity radioisotopes and to provide enhanced facilities for materials testing under controlled conditions.

64. India attached equal importance to non-power applications of nuclear energy, particularly in the areas of health care, agriculture, hygienization of municipal waste and water desalination. The nuclear desalination plant at Kalpakkam, which employed the hybrid technology of multistage flash evaporation and reverse osmosis, had a capacity of 6.3 ML per day, making it the largest desalination unit in the world.

65. The use of isotope hydrology to understand better the impact of climate change on water resources was expanding. India had participated in an Agency coordinated research project on designing a global network of isotope monitoring in large rivers. His country was especially pleased that the theme of the Scientific Forum during the present Conference was the application of nuclear techniques to water.

66. Indian health authorities attached particular significance to combating cancer. A national cancer network initiative had been launched and several cancer care institutes had been expanding their facilities and treatment capabilities. For example, the Tata Memorial Centre, which provided services to nearly 500 000 patients each year, had a new block equipped with sophisticated facilities. An international peer review conducted in October 2010 had rated the Centre's services at par with global standards.

67. The Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), of which India was an active supporter, enabled the channelling of resources and expertise to developing countries. The Bhabhatron teletherapy machine donated to Sri Lanka under PACT the previous year was expected to be commissioned shortly, and arrangements were being made to provide the next machine to Namibia.

68. A new facility for the production of technetium-99m generators had been set up at the laboratories of the Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology in Navi Mumbai. To further enhance its self-reliance, India intended to set up a new facility for the production of fission molybdenum-99 in Trombay.

69. His country was interested in electron accelerator based applications and was developing competencies and building facilities to address several aspects of accelerator technologies.

70. India's nuclear programme attached great importance to research and development. Recent achievements included a review of the design of its advanced heavy water reactor in terms of its robustness against earthquakes, flooding and extended station blackout.

71. Important work was also being done in assessing the behaviour of containment under beyond design basis accident conditions using a scale model of the primary containment of the 540 MW(e) PHWR. The results would be analysed in a round robin exercise involving 15 participants from various countries.

72. Under the Indian Environmental Radiation Monitoring Network, more than 100 solar powered environmental radiation monitors had been deployed at various locations throughout the country, including nuclear power plants and uranium mining sites and major cities.

73. A Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership was being set up near New Delhi to pursue studies in advanced nuclear energy systems, nuclear security, radiological safety and applications of radioisotopes and radiation technologies. Memoranda of understanding had already been signed with the United States of America and the Russian Federation, and one would soon be signed with the Agency. France had also expressed interest. To mark the launch of the Centre, a regional nuclear security training course on physical protection of nuclear facilities against sabotage, assessing vulnerabilities and identifying vital areas, was scheduled to be held in New Delhi in November 2011.

74. The importance of nuclear power as a safe, clean and viable way to meet energy needs and adequately address concerns about global warming and climate change could not be overstated, particularly for developing countries and emerging economies. As regards safety, the world had logged over 14 000 reactor years of power generation, in about 30 countries, with far fewer casualties than any other energy generating technology over a sustained period. That was testimony in itself. Nuclear technology must be pursued further as an important part of a sustainable energy solution for the future.

75. Mr BOURROUET VARGAS (Costa Rica) said that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had had a significant impact on the Agency's work and priorities. He commended the prompt and expert way in which the Secretariat and the Director General had responded to the challenges the accident had posed. He highlighted in particular the convening of the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June and the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which had been approved by the Board of Governors the previous week and was now before the General Conference for its endorsement.

76. The Fukushima accident had demonstrated once again the transboundary and global nature of such events. Costa Rica strongly supported the action plan and urged all Member States to ensure that the voluntary measures it contained were implemented. In view of its unique mandate and capabilities, the Agency should continue at the forefront of efforts to improve nuclear safety worldwide.

77. Regarding the Programme and Budget for 2012–2013, it was essential that the Agency have the financial resources it needed in order to fulfil all its statutory obligations. Moreover, there should be a proper balance in the appropriation of those resources amongst the three pillars of the Agency's activities. Although some progress had been made in correcting the existing imbalances, more work needed to be done.

78. Costa Rica was pleased that agreement had been reached on the TCF targets for 2012 and 2013. It was vital, however, that the Fund's resources be assured, sufficient and predictable so that the technical cooperation programme could be implemented effectively.

79. His Government hoped that the recommendation of the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on TCF targets would be carried out, namely that one working group be launched in 2013 to deal with both the level of the Regular Budget and the TCF targets for 2014 and 2015, in light of the synchronization of the regular programme and budget and TCF cycles.

80. Costa Rica attached high priority to the Agency's activities related to technical cooperation and the transfer of knowledge and technology to enlarge and accelerate the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. It therefore welcomed the efforts to make the technical cooperation programme more efficient so that it had a greater impact on social, economic and technological development.

81. In 2010, the technical cooperation programme had assisted 129 countries using a total of $127.7 million, in addition to which extrabudgetary contributions had been provided. He welcomed the fact that the Peaceful Uses Initiative, launched the previous year by the United States of America, had already attracted some $20 million of the $100 million planned by 2015.

82. Costa Rica cooperated with the Agency on national projects in the areas of integrated water management, the development of industrial applications, improving regulatory infrastructure, strengthening radiation safety, waste management and the security of radioactive sources. It was elaborating a new Country Programme Framework and, in addition, a new United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which would take into account relevant information in connection with the activities it carried out with the Agency's support.

83. Costa Rica had been honoured to serve as a panel member at the 2011 Scientific Forum on the highly relevant topic of water. In that context, the launching of the IAEA water availability enhancement initiative was an important milestone in the Agency's activities in the field of isotope hydrology. Costa Rica had been participating in that initiative as a pilot country together with the Philippines and Oman and hoped that eventually all interested States could be included.

84. He underlined the historical importance of the global eradication of rinderpest achieved jointly by the Agency, FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health. He also drew attention to the

excellent work done by the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco, which were celebrating their 50th anniversary.

85. Costa Rica stressed the importance of ARCAL as an ideal vehicle for cooperation between the Agency and Latin America and the Caribbean. His country was grateful for the continuing support of the Department of Technical Cooperation as well as the resource contributions from other countries and organizations in that regard.

86. An ARCAL priority should be the establishment of stronger links with other regional agreements with a view to exchanging experience and improving project results. An example of such interregional cooperation was the project approved by the Board of Governors in June 2011 in support of a marine benchmark study on the possible impact of the Fukushima radioactive releases in the Asia-Pacific region. The methods developed and results obtained in that project, which was to be carried out under the RCA using extrabudgetary funding, could be extended to all countries of the Pacific, including many members of ARCAL.

87. Earlier in the year, Costa Rica had ratified an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency in connection with the Tlatelolco Treaty; it had entered into force in June. The country attached great importance to the activities carried out by the Agency in relation to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament under the NPT and called on all countries that did not yet have an additional protocol in force to take the necessary steps to that end.

88. Welcoming the fact that conditions had been conducive to the Director General's convening, in November, a forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East, he said that Cost Rica would participate actively in that forum on the basis of its experience as a party to the Tlatelolco Treaty and also in its capacity as coordinator in Vienna for matters related to OPANAL. His delegation hoped that all the countries of the Middle East would take part in that meeting in an open and constructive manner so that it could prove a useful building block in the process of achieving a comprehensive and durable peace in the region without the threat of nuclear weapons.

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

89. Mr PUJA (Indonesia) said that the Conference was taking place at a time when it was vital to maintain the positive momentum achieved in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the Agency should seize that opportunity. The entry into force of the New START was a heartening development and his country hoped that the Russian Federation and the United States would build on that achievement and continue to work toward further arms reductions and, ultimately, the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The Treaty should have a strong verification regime.

90. Indonesia hoped that that positive trend would be reflected in the positions of the nuclear-weapon States on nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Pursuant to a decision by ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Bali in July 2011, after a 10-year impasse, direct consultations between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States had been resumed in Geneva the preceding month and follow-up was scheduled for the coming month in New York. Many hoped they would be the last direct consultations. The aim was to resolve outstanding issues on a number of the provisions of the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty with a view to ensuring early accession of the nuclear-weapon States to it. As the current chair of ASEAN, his country was convinced that it was in the shared interest of ASEAN and all the nuclear-weapon States to ensure, by the end of the year, that those consultations yielded a satisfactory outcome which accommodated equitably the legitimate concerns of all parties.

91. In the Middle East, Indonesia supported a comprehensive and balanced approach to resolving the issue of non-proliferation. Hence, it supported the conclusions and recommendations for further action of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, including the convening in 2012 of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States in the region and with the full support of the nuclear-weapon States. It also supported the Director General's initiative to convene a forum on that issue in November 2011 and stood ready to participate constructively in that process.

92. ASEAN Foreign Ministers had stated their view that the prolonged crisis on the Korean Peninsula would have a negative impact on security and stability in the region. That crisis should be resolved through the six-party talks, and ASEAN stood ready to contribute to that resumption. ASEAN was committed to supporting the creation of a conducive environment on the Korean Peninsula through the ASEAN Regional Forum, in which all countries involved in the six-party talks participated. Building confidence and mutual trust among the parties concerned should continue to be the priority in resolving the DPRK issue.

93. His country looked forward to the Director General's planned visit to Jakarta to advance cooperation between Indonesia and the Agency. As a country that had benefited from widespread application of nuclear techniques in the water sector, Indonesia supported the Director General's decision to prioritize that issue in the current year. Isotopic tracer technology had been used widely in Indonesian universities, the country's Geological Agency, drinking water industries and geothermal exploration. In the latter field, isotopic tracers had been used to determine recharge areas and the origin of geothermal fluids. In the field of water management, isotope technology had been widely applied to resolve recharge area and groundwater dating problems. Thus, isotope hydrology had helped mitigate water shortage in areas where there were problems with water cleanliness.

94. Indonesia appreciated the visit of the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation and the Deputy Director General for Nuclear Sciences and Applications, during which they had had an opportunity to visit facilities and witness the application of nuclear science and technology in various areas developed through the Agency's technical cooperation programme, the RCA and other regional programmes.

95. There was a need for continued support for the Agency's resources for technical cooperation. Indonesia had pledged to pay its share of the TCF target for 2012, which amounted to $180 000. The Agency's technical cooperation programme was the main vehicle whereby the Agency fulfilled its mandate to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, especially in developing regions of the world.

96. At the meetings of the Board of Governors in June, the Director General had indicated that the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative was playing an important role in helping the Agency offset the lack of sufficient financial resources to fulfil its mandate. Indonesia commended those countries that had contributed to the Initiative and encouraged all others in a position to do so to follow suit so that the target of $100 million by 2015 could be attained. The Agency should continue to use those resources to finance footnote-a/ projects in line with established technical cooperation criteria and procedures.

97. During the current year, his country had made progress in the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. It had submitted its instrument of ratification for the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management on 1 April 2011.

98. With respect to nuclear power, Indonesia had started putting human resources and basic infrastructure in place in the 1960s but had not been able to bring its plans to fruition, mainly as a result of the public acceptance issue. Taking due account of the renewed awareness of the importance

of nuclear power plant safety in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident, his country would continue to prepare itself for the introduction of nuclear power as mandated by presidential decree.

99. INPRO was an important forum for the exchange of information and experience in the nuclear power field. Indonesia was planning a Nuclear Energy System Assessment using the INPRO methodology. In previous years, it had supported INPRO by providing one cost-free expert each year; since 2011, it had been providing two.

100. He expressed his country's sympathy to the people and Government of Japan in connection with the unfortunate events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in March 2011, and admiration and respect for the tremendous courage and resilience shown by the Japanese emergency team in getting the facility back under control. Apart from the rescue workers and medical assistance and supplies his country had sent in the early days of the accident, the Indonesian Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency had offered to dispatch its nuclear emergency response team to Fukushima. As the chair of ASEAN, Indonesia had also initiated a special Japan-ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting in April to promote further cooperation in disaster management. In May, one of its radiological protection and emergency response experts had joined the Agency-led international fact-finding mission to Fukushima.

101. It was crucial to address nuclear safety in order to restore public confidence. Expectations of the Agency following the accident were high. Advantage should be taken of the current momentum to embark on a global rethink of nuclear safety. In that connection, his country supported the endorsement by the General Conference of the outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety and the follow-up thereto, including the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

102. The role of the RCA in promoting the use of nuclear technology for socio-economic development in Asia and the Pacific could not be overlooked. In the almost 40 years the RCA had existed, the participating countries and the Agency had accumulated valuable experience in cooperation and the coordination of nuclear-related development activities in the region and Indonesia was determined to continue its active participation in that process. As the current chair of the RCA, in April 2011 Indonesia had hosted the 33rd meeting of national RCA representatives in Bali, which had been attended by around 60 representatives.

103. Indonesia continued to support international cooperation in nuclear security. The Agency, which played a central role in that area, should continue to foster coordination and exchange of information with other relevant organizations and nuclear security-related initiatives in order to prevent duplication of effort. It should also establish a mechanism that would allow all Member States to be involved in the development of Nuclear Security Series documents. His country had co-hosted with the Agency a high-level regional workshop on the international legal framework for nuclear security in July 2011 which had been attended by representatives of ASEAN member countries. That event had raised awareness of the importance of strong and effective measures to enhance nuclear security. Indonesia noted the value of model legislation or implementation kits for nuclear security that could be used to transpose certain provisions into national legislation. It also emphasized the importance of updating the Agency's *Handbook on Nuclear Law: Implementing Legislation*.

104. In conclusion, his country's commitment to safeguards implementation remained strong and it was taking part in the efforts in the Asia-Pacific region to improve safeguards collaboration by launching the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network.

105. Mr PETERSEN (Norway) said that the nuclear accident at Fukushima had once again demonstrated the uncertainties and risks involved in the development of nuclear energy. Above all, it drove home once again the fundamental lesson that even the improbable did sometimes happen and it

was thus necessary to be prepared for the unthinkable. Furthermore, the risk of accidents might grow given the likely increase in the use of nuclear energy worldwide.

106. Nuclear safety was a national responsibility but, as the Fukushima accident had shown, nuclear accidents would never be only a national concern, and they could only be dealt with through international cooperation. Both the Agency and its Member States had a critical role to play in reducing the risk of future accidents to a minimum. Sharing of information between nations, both directly and through the Agency, and the provision of accurate, timely and relevant information to the public were crucial. His country welcomed the plans to develop the Agency's analytical capabilities in that regard.

107. Fukushima had also demonstrated the need to improve not only nuclear safety but also emergency preparedness and response. Both the Agency's capabilities and national capabilities in that area needed to be developed, and in particular cooperation between the Agency and countries in order to ensure efficiency. The Agency had a key role to play in that regard, both in its own right as the prime multilateral forum in that field and as a facilitator of increased international cooperation.

108. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was a step in the right direction. The plan outlined welcome measures to improve both nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response, and he commended the Secretariat and Member States for their comprehensive and excellent work in that regard. Norway also welcomed the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security which was being held in New York in the current week and looked forward to its conclusions. The challenge now was to ensure proper and timely implementation of the action plan, and of the recommendations in the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies. The Agency must have sufficient resources to perform those tasks.

109. The Agency must be equipped to take on both current and future challenges. Funding for statutory activities was still inadequate. His country had consistently argued that the Agency's Regular Budget must increase in proportion to its tasks in order to ensure a sustainable effort in the nuclear safety field. Norway had allocated €2.5 million over four years to support the organization's work to strengthen safety capacity in developing countries, and had provided extrabudgetary funding for programmes on safe nuclear energy for Romania and Bulgaria. Those programmes were now in the final phase and Norway hoped that the results would be transferable to Member States that were upgrading their nuclear safety competencies and capacities.

110. Terrorism, like nuclear accidents, did not halt at national borders. Though the commitment to nuclear security had been confirmed at the highest political level, progress with respect to adherence to the important 2005 amendment to the CPPNM was slow. His country called on all States to sign and ratify the global conventions on nuclear safety and security and to cooperate with the Agency in their implementation. It also fully supported the follow-up to the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington in 2010 and was contributing actively itself in such areas as minimization of the use of HEU in the civilian sector. It was currently planning a follow-up to the 2005 international symposium held on that topic in Oslo.

111. Interest in nuclear energy was increasing and it was his Government's priority to ensure that the decision to use nuclear energy went hand in hand with the highest levels of nuclear safety and security. Norway had pledged approximately $3.7 million over four years to strengthen the Agency's nuclear security assistance to developing countries. It also contributed financially to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and to efforts to ensure the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

112. Nuclear safety and nuclear security could not be dealt with in isolation from non-proliferation and disarmament. It was essential that those issues be addressed in a coordinated manner to minimize the various inherent risks of nuclear power. A world without nuclear weapons could only be achieved through a strong and universal NPT and a strong Agency with an effective safeguards system. He urged all States to join the NPT, to sign and adhere to safeguards agreements and to work towards the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. Norway viewed a comprehensive safeguards agreement in combination with an additional protocol as the current verification standard. It called on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify an additional protocol without delay. Only with the help of that instrument could the Agency provide comprehensive assurances, without which non-proliferation and security were challenged.

113. Regarding the DPRK, Norway remained deeply concerned at that country's continued lack of cooperation with the Agency and the international community. The DPRK must refrain from any further provocations, comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and return to the six-party talks immediately without preconditions. His country urged the DPRK to abandon and dismantle completely any nuclear weapons-related programme in a prompt, verifiable and irreversible manner.

114. There were still outstanding questions in relation to the nuclear programme of Iran and the potential military dimensions thereof. His country called on Iran to engage with the Agency to resolve those issues. Nobody was questioning Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but that right came with responsibilities and Iran must adhere to its international commitments.

115. In his report to the Board of Governors in June (GOV/2011/30), the Director General had concluded that the building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site had been a nuclear reactor and should have been declared to the Agency. While Norway welcomed the recent letter in which Syria indicated its willingness to cooperate with the Agency in relation to the Dair Alzour site, it found it regrettable that that offer was so late in coming and called upon Syria to extend its full cooperation to the Agency and resolve any remaining questions regarding its nuclear programme without further delay.

116. Norway had been strongly supporting multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle and the establishment of the Agency's LEU bank. It remained firmly convinced that the fuel bank would constitute an important step towards the development of a new, equitable and sustainable international nuclear fuel cycle regime which was fully in line with the right of countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and was beneficial to energy security without distorting the existing fuel market, while at the same time furthering the goals of non-proliferation and a world free of nuclear weapons.

117. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy went far beyond the production of electricity. Safe water supplies, better crops, nuclear diagnostics and medicine, energy planning and pest control were just a few of the areas in which the Agency provided assistance. His country supported the Agency's technical cooperation programme, paid its full share of the funding for it and was glad to host scientific visits by experts from other countries to Norway. He emphasized that the Agency could only contribute positively to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in close partnership with other United Nations organizations.

118. His own country's position on nuclear energy was well known. It fully supported Article IV of the NPT and respected every nation's sovereign right to choose its own energy mix, provided that the highest levels of safety and security were maintained. The Agency should be ready to assist in the overall assessment of the options of Member States requesting assistance with energy planning. Nuclear energy might not necessarily be the answer and a number of countries, including his own, had chosen not to include it in their energy mix.

119. Norway welcomed the convening of an IAEA forum later in the year in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of nuclear-weapon-free zones established in other regions.

120. The nuclear challenges of the coming decades were perhaps more daunting than any yet and all of them — from managing a global nuclear renaissance to preventing nuclear terrorism — required both sustained international cooperation and a highly professional and efficient Agency. Norway was committed to supporting both.

121. Ms BUJÁN FREIRE (Spain), having offered condolences to the Government and people of Japan following the earthquake, tsunami and accident at Fukushima, said that her country had just awarded the 2011 Prince of Asturias Award for Concord to the valiant and self-sacrificing Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) workers known as the 'heroes of Fukushima'.

122. Spain supported implementation of the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which included 64 concrete steps for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and also the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Spain hoped that the conference would be the first step in the process of building confidence in the Middle East.

123. In that context, it welcomed the Director General's efforts to convene a forum on 21 and 22 November to discuss experience relevant to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in the hope that it would contribute to a climate of confidence and transparency in preparation for the 2012 conference.

124. Universalization of the NPT, safeguards agreements and the additional protocol thereto was essential in order to maintain confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Spain was pleased that 110 countries had now ratified an additional protocol and appealed to all other countries which had not yet done so to conclude an additional protocol as soon as possible. Similarly, Spain called on the 15 States party to the NPT which did not have a comprehensive safeguards agreements yet in force to remedy that situation swiftly.

125. Spain appreciated the fact that the Agency was already applying integrated safeguards in almost 50 States, enabling more efficient use of human and financial resources. Like 20 other Member States, Spain had approved a Member State Support Programme for safeguards to help strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

126. Having underscored the impartial, objective and authoritative way in which the Director General and the Secretariat performed the Agency's verification mandate, she expressed her Government's support for Agency efforts with regard to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Spain regretted Iran's lack of cooperation and transparency which was preventing the Agency from fulfilling its verification mandate. Spain also regretted the most recent actions of the Iranian authorities to triple the production of 20% enriched uranium and transfer its production to Fordow, actions which undermined the international community's confidence in the exclusively civil and peaceful nature of the programme. Spain was particularly concerned about the possible military dimension of the Iranian nuclear programme and Iran's continued lack of cooperation in that regard, as reported by the Director General. Spain urged the Secretariat to submit to the Board of Governors a comprehensive and conclusive report on the real scope of Iran's nuclear programme so that progress could be made toward finding a diplomatic solution to the matter. Spain called on Iran once again to comply with all its obligations deriving from Security Council and Board of Governors resolutions, including the suspension of uranium enrichment. Iran should comply with its safeguards agreement with the Agency and all its subsidiary agreements without exception and it should ratify and comply with the additional protocol.

127. On the issue of the DPRK, Spain urged that country to return to the six-party talks, observe the relevant Security Council resolutions and return to the NPT, thus enabling the return of Agency inspectors. The DPRK should abstain from any actions that would increase tension in the region.

128. Spain was concerned that the Director General had concluded in June that the Dair Alzour facility was most probably a nuclear reactor and that Syria should have declared it in accordance with its safeguards obligations. Spain reiterated its call on Syria to solve the problem of its non-compliance. It should also cooperate with the Agency to clarify all outstanding questions and sign and ratify an additional protocol without delay.

129. Bearing in mind that the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, as well as the subsequent attacks in Madrid in 2004, London in 2005 and elsewhere, had brought about a radical change in perceptions about the risk of nuclear terrorism, Spain supported the resolve of the first Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington in April 2010, to strengthen nuclear security, and it reaffirmed the central role of the Agency in that endeavour. Spain would maintain that position at the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Seoul in March 2012.

130. The Agency was uniquely equipped in terms of technical and human capabilities to address the new nuclear threats by, for example, preparing action plans for protection against, prevention of and response to nuclear terrorism, developing reference guides, standards, methodologies and techniques for strengthening nuclear installation security, or by providing technical assistance to States. In addition, it could coordinate both international activities in that sphere and the efforts made by States, either unilaterally or in the framework of multilateral initiatives such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

131. In Spain's view there was a need for in-depth consideration of the increasing synergy and complementarity of nuclear installation safety and security when dealing with all types of threat, whether natural in origin or resulting from criminal acts.

132. The nuclear accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant would determine much of the work done by States and the Agency in the years to come. Review and strengthening of the entire nuclear safety regime would be based on the lessons learned from that accident. From the point of view of accident prevention and management, the Fukushima accident had demonstrated the need for international harmonization of the safety criteria established in national legislation on the basis of Agency standards.

133. In addition, there was a need to further improve the international mechanisms for communication and cooperation, develop tools for promoting the exchange of information among regulatory bodies and ensure transparent public information in the event of emergencies.

134. The Agency's regulatory review missions were extremely important in order to attain levels of excellence in that regard. Through its regulatory body, the Nuclear Safety Council, Spain had a history of cooperation with the Agency in relation to such missions to other countries.

135. In 2008, Spain had received an IRRS mission. At the beginning of 2011, it had hosted a follow-up mission, the results of which had demonstrated the good progress made in that regard.

136. It was important for all countries using nuclear technology not only to have internationally recognized standards, but also to ensure their rigorous and effective application. Improvements needed to be made to those standards in light of the Fukushima accident, for which the extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in August 2012 presented an ideal opportunity.

137. Spain held in high regard all the efforts that the Agency, under the Director General's leadership, had made in recent months, particularly through the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, held in June 2011, where Member States had endorsed a Ministerial Declaration encompassing many of the measures that her country considered to be fundamental. Adoption of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety had been another positive step. It was crucial that the Member States felt a sense of urgency about putting those measures into practice.

138. Spain had adopted various measures at the national level since the Fukushima accident. As a first response, it had performed immediate verifications of its nuclear plants to ensure that all the safety provisions for preventing and mitigating accidents were fully operational. After that, the nuclear power plant owners, under the supervision of the Nuclear Safety Council, had reassessed their installations' safety margins as part of the EU stress tests. The Council had already submitted its preliminary report on the results of that analysis and was expected to approve the final report for submission by the end of the year.

139. The European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group's First Regulatory Conference on Nuclear Safety in Europe, held in June 2011 and presided over by the Chairperson of Spain's Nuclear Safety Council, had confirmed the shared European vision.

140. No review of Spain's activities in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection would be complete without mentioning its participation in the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, the aim of which was to promote high levels of safety in all practices using radioactive or nuclear material in the Ibero-American region. The Forum was an excellent example of sustainable and self-financing regional cooperation in close collaboration with the Agency. Its wide-ranging technical programme included peer-reviewed safety assessment of nuclear power plants.

141. Other technical cooperation activities with the Agency included those under ARCAL, and she noted in particular the start of preparations for the next Regional Strategic Profile, given that the current one ran until 2013.

142. Finally, she reiterated Spain's firm support for the Director General and wished him every success in the performance of his functions.

143. Mr BARRETT (Canada) said that the world had witnessed with deep concern the human tragedy unfolding in Japan following the Tohoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami. Canada, along with many countries, had offered humanitarian and technical assistance to the Japanese Government and to the people in the communities most devastated by the tsunami. The impact, in Japan and other parts of the world, of the most severe nuclear safety crisis since Chernobyl was as yet unknown.

144. Like other Member States with nuclear power plants, Canada had taken swift action on a national basis to address and strengthen public confidence in the safety of those installations. It had also turned to the Agency, as the primary international organization in matters relating to the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, to take the lead in raising safety standards, reviewing the safety of nuclear facilities worldwide and enhancing international cooperation towards the shared goal of the safe and secure use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

145. It was Canada's view that, in spite of the Fukushima tragedy, nuclear power would continue to play a vital role in supplying the world's energy and therefore the importance of the Agency would only grow. Sovereign States bore the responsibility not only for ensuring the safety of their nuclear facilities, but also for assuring their neighbours and the international community that their use of nuclear energy was safe, since the consequences of nuclear accidents, should they occur, did not respect State boundaries.

146. For that reason, Canada had worked hard to ensure that the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, adopted the previous week by the Board of Governors, set the highest possible safety standards, provided for best practices and peer reviews to assist countries in meeting those standards and built public confidence, at home and abroad, in the activities of national regulators and nuclear power plant operators in the area of nuclear safety. When it came to protecting human health and the environment, national and collective responsibility must go hand in hand. The action plan was therefore a living document which must be continuously reviewed and updated.

147. He stressed that adoption of that action plan was not an end in itself, but must be followed by robust, effective and transparent implementation. To that end, as a small but important first step in bringing transparency to peer review, Canada recommended the publication of a list of all countries that had hosted IRRS missions and/or were planning one in the near future.

148. For its part, Canada was leading by example. In the aftermath of the Fukushima accident, it had performed stress tests and reviewed the safe operation of its CANDU reactors. In addition, it strongly advocated the use of IRRS missions as a means of continuously strengthening its safety efforts. The first such mission to Canada had taken place in 2009, and the results had been published on the website of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. While revealing that Canada had a strong and mature regulatory system, the review had identified opportunities for improvement. Those improvements had been made and there would soon be an IRRS follow-up mission. That mission would be a milestone for the Agency, as it would be the first having a module focused specifically on reviewing response to the Fukushima accident.

149. Canada would have an excellent opportunity to further address lessons learned from Fukushima when it hosted the IAEA Conference on Effective Nuclear Regulatory Systems in 2013.

150. In the post-Fukushima world, it was necessary for all to work diligently to really learn the lessons and not just pay lip service to them. A global nuclear framework that would restore and strengthen confidence in the safe use of nuclear energy worldwide was within everybody's grasp.

151. Turning to the subject of nuclear non-proliferation, he said that no one should be fooled by Iran's claims that it was a law-abiding member of the international community in the matter of its nuclear programme. Iran was wilfully ignoring the unambiguous legal requirements placed on it by the Security Council and by the Board of Governors in connection with its nuclear activities. Iran refused to cooperate and engage with the Agency in addressing the issues of concern surrounding its nuclear ambitions, announcements and activities. That failure to cooperate fully after so many years of repeated insistence by the Agency undermined Iran's claims that its nuclear programme was peaceful. Canada called on Iran to cease its campaign of concealment and obfuscation, and instead pursue a path of cooperation with the Agency in order to create international confidence that it was complying with its NPT commitments.

152. In June 2011, the Board of Governors had voted in favour of reporting Syria to the Security Council over the clandestine construction of a nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour. Despite having had ample opportunity to cooperate effectively with the Agency in disproving that conclusion, Syria had refused to do so. Canada would deeply regret Syria's pursuing the same path of intransigence as Iran.

153. Canada had voiced serious concerns about the DPRK's uranium enrichment programme and light water reactor construction activities, which were in violation of Security Council resolutions and the DPRK's commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement. Canada reaffirmed that the DPRK did not have — and could not have — the status of a nuclear-weapon State under the NPT.

154. One of the fundamental ways in which the Agency contributed to international security was through its application of safeguards in verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Canada was

pleased to note that the majority of States with safeguards agreements in force had comprehensive safeguards agreements and an additional protocol thereto. It believed strongly that that was the current verification standard and encouraged all Member States that had not yet done so to adopt that standard.

155. Canada strongly supported the views of the Deputy Director General for Safeguards on the need to move towards a State-specific, information-driven safeguards system which would also optimize the use of the Agency's human and financial resources.

156. Canada would continue to support the Agency's technical cooperation programme and saluted its efforts in that regard. It encouraged Member States to pay their share of the technical cooperation target and their Regular Budget contributions in full and on time. In addition, Canada supported zero-real-growth budgeting.

157. His country recognized the important role played by the Agency in relation to nuclear security. Since 2004, it had contributed more than $12 million to the Nuclear Security Fund. Canada intended to implement the commitments made at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and was looking forward to the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul as an important opportunity for further cooperation in such key areas as physical protection, the prevention of illicit trafficking and the securing of radioactive sources.

158. Under its domestic nuclear power programme, Canada was contemplating the construction of two new nuclear reactors at the Darlington site in the Province of Ontario. Seventeen days of public hearings on that proposal had been held in March and April 2011. In August, the Government-appointed panel had determined that the proposal was not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects and had therefore recommended approval of the new nuclear power plants.

159. In closing, he commended the Director General's leadership and dedication to the Agency's mission of promoting the safe and secure use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

160. Mr DIÁZ (Mexico) said that the tragic events at Fukushima had raised questions about the future of nuclear energy, with several countries announcing that they would abandon or delay their nuclear power generation plans. The lessons learned from the accident should lead to improvements in the safety of nuclear installations.

161. Mexico would collaborate with the Agency and the international community to prevent further nuclear accidents, analyse safety improvements and help strengthen the international system for response to nuclear emergencies. The design bases for mitigating potential natural phenomena related hazards for each country's specific situation should be examined.

162. All countries with nuclear power plants had a responsibility to their own people and to the international community to ensure high levels of operational safety. Mexico supported the promotion and maintenance of a robust nuclear safety culture, including the sharing of best practices and the development of national capacities through international cooperation, an area in which the Agency had a decisive role to play.

163. The Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies had decided to perform stress tests on nuclear power reactors in the Ibero-American region, along the lines of those being carried out in Europe and other regions, with a view to reassessing the safety parameters of those installations.

164. It was important that the Agency increase the dissemination of information about the ways in which nuclear power could help address the environmental challenges now facing the world and in that way help to raise public knowledge about the subject. The Agency needed to demonstrate that

nuclear energy was clean and safe, especially in light of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

165. Mexico attached particular importance to its technical cooperation with the Agency, particularly as it was directly related to development. Mexico's more than 50 years of cooperation with the Agency had enabled it to improve its capabilities in such areas as the creation of a radiosterilized tissue bank, radiopharmaceutical production, nuclear medicine, instrumentation and equipment maintenance and calibration, pest control, operational nuclear safety and radiation protection.

166. In December 2010, Mexico had signed a Country Programme Framework for 2010–2015 which incorporated proposals closely linked to the UN Millennium Development Goals, the UN Development Assistance Framework and its national development plan, thereby ensuring that its projects were relevant and had a major impact on the country. Aware of the importance of technical cooperation for the majority of Member States, Mexico had paid its share of the TCF target for 2011.

167. Although nuclear security was first and foremost the responsibility of each sovereign country, the Agency was central to the nuclear security regime. Thus, Mexico supported Agency activities to promote the physical protection of nuclear material and installations and radioactive sources, and to strengthen States' legislation and regulations. Those activities were a fundamental part of measures aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism. It was an area in which the Agency had extensive experience and highly qualified personnel and, most importantly, it provided a forum for all its Member States to work together.

168. In that context, Mexico had recently signed a project and supply agreement with the United States of America and the Agency for the replacement of the HEU in the TRIGA III research reactor at the National Nuclear Research Institute with LEU. It was expected that the transfer would be completed successfully at the start of 2012. That project demonstrated his country's commitment to the agreements reached at the 2010 Washington Nuclear Security Summit.

169. Mexico welcomed Agency support in strengthening security at its borders, ports and airports as regards the detection of nuclear material. Illicit trafficking in nuclear material and radioactive sources was a real concern and his country was prepared to contribute to efforts in that regard.

170. It was also grateful for the assistance the Agency had provided with respect to security measures for the 16th Pan American Games to be held in Guadalajara in October 2011.

171. The additional protocol to Mexico's agreement with the Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT had entered into force on 4 March 2011. His country urged all those Member States which had not yet taken that step to do so.

172. To ensure proper fulfilment of the provisions of its additional protocol, his country had requested an ISSAS mission. Thus far, the Agency had carried out a preparatory mission and had given a training course on the additional protocol in Mexico.

173. His country was pleased that a consensus had been achieved on convening a forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East in November. As a staunch supporter of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Mexico was party to the Tlatelolco Treaty, the first treaty to establish such a zone in a populated area, thus setting an example to other regions of the world.

174. Regarding the DPRK, Mexico called for the resumption of the six-party talks with a view to prompt denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK's reincorporation into the NPT regime.

175. His country urged the Republic of Iran to cooperate fully and immediately with the Agency and take the steps necessary to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with its obligations under the NPT.

176. His delegation noted that the draft budget for 2012 entailed an increase of 3.2% as compared with 2011. Mexico, a traditional supporter of a policy of zero real growth, now advocated zero nominal growth because of domestic financial constraints and was therefore in favour of any measures which made the Agency's budget more transparent and efficient. There must be a clear correlation between the Agency's programmatic priorities and the budget heading allocations. In addition, Mexico stressed the need to maintain an appropriate balance between the Agency's statutory activities and the importance of considering the Member States' needs and interests.

177. Finally, he said that Mexico, like many other developing countries, would like to benefit even more from the use of nuclear energy and its various applications. Hence, there was now more than ever before a need to build confidence in the safe use of nuclear energy. The public should be informed about the clear advantages of nuclear energy as a low-cost, climate-neutral and safe energy source. A balance should be struck between safety and the need to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT.

178. Ms RASI (Finland) said that 2011 had been marked by the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant caused by the earthquake and tsunami. She expressed sympathy to the people and Government of Japan for the tragic losses and suffering endured.

179. In Finland, nuclear power was a major component in the energy mix. Finland's fifth nuclear power unit was under construction and a decision enabling the start of preparations for two new projects had been endorsed by the parliament. As a result, Finland would not only be self-sufficient in electricity generation for the first time in several decades, but was also taking an important step towards carbon emission-free energy.

180. High priority was attached to nuclear power plant safety in Finland. However, the accident in Japan had been a useful reminder and reassessment of safety had been launched in Finland immediately after the accident. Preliminary results had shown that there were no immediate safety concerns at Finnish nuclear facilities and a more in-depth assessment was still under way, in combination with the Europe-wide stress tests. She underlined the importance of similar stress tests being conducted in all countries operating nuclear power plants.

181. It was vital that countries using nuclear energy had clear legislation and responsibilities and that regulatory bodies were given not just the necessary authority and independence in their decision-making but also the resources needed to carry out their tasks. In addition, regulatory authorities must enjoy public trust.

182. Finland was of the view that Member States and the Agency should strengthen and coordinate their efforts to ensure that countries embarking on nuclear power programmes developed sound safety infrastructures. While the Agency had a central role in contributing to conditions for the safe use of nuclear energy, it should be underscored that the prime responsibility for the safe and secure use of nuclear power lay with the licensed operators.

183. Her Government subscribed fully to the declaration issuing from the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June, particularly the commitment to enhance the central role of the Agency in promoting cooperation and in coordinating international efforts to strengthen global nuclear safety. Finland looked forward to strong support from all Member States for the effective, prompt and adequately resourced implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

184. For her Government, the NPT remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Nuclear weapons proliferation remained a serious concern and the international community must take appropriate measures in cases of non-compliance in order to preserve the integrity and authority of the system.

185. Finland welcomed the consensus reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, as well as the agreement to convene a conference on the Middle East in 2012. It was looking forward to the Agency's forum on that topic in November as an important preparatory step for the 2012 conference.

186. Finland was strongly committed to strengthening nuclear security worldwide. As its contribution to the preparations for the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, Finland was hosting a Sherpa meeting in Helsinki in October. Finland had provided support to the Agency's nuclear security activities and had already made a commitment to contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund that year. She was pleased to announce that Finland had deposited its instrument of ratification for the Amendment to the CPPNM and encouraged all States to do the same.

187. Finland recognized the importance of the technical cooperation programme which, for many States, represented the most tangible form of cooperation with the Agency.

188. Nuclear technology and its applications could be of significant help in many spheres and it could contribute to addressing global challenges and promoting the Millennium Development Goals. Finland commended the Agency's active role in that regard. She drew particular attention to its work in the field of human and animal health, including the emphasis on cancer control in developing countries and the 2011 Scientific Forum's focus on water.

189. Finland had always paid its share in full and on time to the Regular Budget and to the TCF and would continue to do so. There was increasing demand for technical cooperation related to the introduction of nuclear power and its safe use and it was important for the Agency to be able to respond to that demand in an effective and sustainable manner in partnership with the wider UN family and other relevant organizations.

190. Her Government continued to attach strong importance to strengthening gender equality in the UN organizations, and the Agency was no exception. Women must be empowered to enjoy the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as men. While Finland appreciated the Agency's continuing efforts in that regard, work remained to be done in improving the representation of women in the Secretariat and in mainstreaming gender issues in the Agency's policies, programmes and organizational practices.

191. Mr ZOGRAFOS (Greece) said that the serious accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had brought the international nuclear community together to assist the Japanese Government and to study the implications. Additional safety measures were required to avoid the recurrence of such accidents in the future.

192. Greece had a strong interest in the Agency's expanding nuclear safety and security programmes. The Agency's activities in that regard, with the help of Member States and other regional and international organizations, would enhance the global safety and security framework.

193. Greece supported all the Director General's efforts, especially those undertaken after the Fukushima accident, to strengthen safety requirements through training and technical meetings and to ensure the establishment of independent regulatory authorities. The International Seismic Safety Centre launched by the Agency a few years previously had an important role to play for countries in active seismic zones that were considering nuclear power programmes.

194. The Greek Atomic Energy Commission was sharing the experience it had gained in the area of nuclear security and illicit trafficking in nuclear material following the installation of detection equipment at its borders and the distribution of such equipment to the customs, police and coastguard authorities. In so doing, it was contributing to international efforts to mitigate the risk of nuclear and radioactive material being used in criminal acts.

195. In addition, Greece had finalized the document required under its constitution to adopt the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM and hoped that it would soon enter into force.

196. Noting that effective safeguards and inspections of nuclear material and facilities were a sine qua non for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, he said that it was possible under the NPT safeguards system to limit the access of inspectors within a nuclear facility. Greece therefore urgently called for universal adherence to the additional protocol by all States party to the NPT.

197. The NPT Review Conferences set the standards for the success of the non-proliferation and, by the same token, the safeguards regime. The positive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had enhanced international confidence in that regime, which was dependent on political support at the international and regional level to ensure compliance with non-proliferation undertakings. Greece actively and unequivocally supported all efforts to further strengthen the role of the Agency to that end. The Agency should concentrate its effort on state-of-the-art measurement technologies, remote monitoring and satellite imagery to assist States Party to ensure transparency and build confidence in their implementation of the NPT. It was vital that the safeguards system remain strong and effective and that it become universal.

198. Bearing in mind that the Director General had pointed out once again in his latest report that Iran had not provided the necessary cooperation to confirm that all its nuclear facilities and material were used for peaceful purposes, and also that he was not confident about the absence of possible military dimensions to that programme, Greece called on Iran to comply with all its international obligations, including under the resolutions of the Board of Governors and the Security Council, and to engage in a meaningful process to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

199. Likewise, Greece called on Syria to improve its cooperation with the Agency as stipulated by the resolution adopted by the Board of Governors in June 2011 (GOV/2011/41).

200. With regard to the DPRK, Greece urged that country's Government to return to the full implementation of its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency.

201. Greece supported the Agency's efforts to increase Member States' capabilities in the development and application of nuclear science for their scientific, technological and economic development. In particular, he pointed to the greater utilization of research reactors and the establishment of the Mediterranean Research Reactor Network in September 2010.

202. It was important for the Agency to expand its cooperation with other international organizations like FAO, WHO, UNESCO and UNDP on projects of common interest in the field of natural sciences.

203. Successful cooperation between the Agency and the Greek Atomic Energy Commission in the field of education and training had led to the signing of a long-term agreement establishing the terms of reference for the Commission to act as a regional training centre in Europe for nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety. A major event in that context was the post-graduate course on radiation protection and the safety of radioactive sources to be held in October 2011.

204. Having expressed appreciation for the Agency's technical cooperation programme, he commended the Secretariat's pre-planning of the 2012–2013 technical cooperation cycle to reflect new

global trends and realities. Greece believed that the programme should focus mainly on the use of radiation in health care and on raising safety and security levels in all aspects of the peaceful use of nuclear technology. In managing the programme, the importance of partnerships with other international and regional organizations should not be overlooked. The Secretariat's interaction with Member States and their national institutions was necessary to enable cooperation on agreed national and regional objectives. Greek scientists took an active part in the Agency's technical cooperation activities, including expert missions, scientific visits and the hosting of fellows in Greek laboratories free of charge. There was increasing interest on the part of Greek scientists to participate in regional and international projects.

205. In conclusion, he said that the Greek Atomic Energy Commission had requested an IRRS mission, which was due to take place in May 2012.

206. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his Government's condolences to the Government and people of Japan following the disaster that had struck the country and destroyed parts of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. He also thanked the Agency for its regular reports and updates on the impact of the accident. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011 had led to the drafting of the first ever action plan aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and emergency preparedness.

207. With regard to the application of safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic, his country was deeply disappointed at the adoption by the Board of Governors in June 2011 of a resolution (GOV/2011/41) that was based on hypotheses rather than proven facts. The resolution also ran counter to the desire of many Member States to keep the matter within the Agency in order to maintain a spirit of dialogue and cooperation between Syria and the Agency. The resolution had not reflected Syria's cooperation with the Agency nor its willingness to cooperate further, as expressed in Syria's letter of 26 May 2011. Nonetheless, Syria had reaffirmed its obligations under relevant international instruments and had demonstrated the seriousness of its desire to cooperate with the Agency in its letter to the Director General of 24 August 2011 in which it had proposed a meeting with the Agency's Department of Safeguards in October to agree on a plan of action to resolve outstanding issues relating to the destroyed site at Dair Alzour.

208. He recalled that the item had been placed on the agenda of the Board of Governors as a consequence of Israel's destruction of a military building in Dair Alzour which had had no relation whatever to nuclear activities. That attack had constituted a brazen violation of Syrian sovereignty and a flagrant breach of international law and the UN Charter and should have been strongly condemned by the international community. Moreover, the failure of certain States to provide information concerning the destroyed building in a timely manner had seriously impeded the Agency's ability to discharge its responsibilities under the NPT and Syria's safeguards agreement, as reflected in the Agency's first report on the subject.

209. The use by some States of the Director General's reports to step up pressure on Syria provided ample evidence of the politicization of the Agency's work by those States.

210. More than ten years after the adoption by the General Conference of decision GC(44)/DEC/12 concerning the convening of a forum to share the experience of other regions relevant to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the Director General had finally taken that step. To ensure the success of the forum, the States participating should have acceded to the NPT and the agenda should include an item on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone specifically in the Middle East, which differed from other regions in that Israel had a nuclear arsenal that was not subject to international oversight.

211. The General Conference's adoption of the resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities in 2009 (GC(53)/RES/17) had sent a clear message. The resolution called on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. In Syria's view, the resolution reflected many Member States' concerns regarding Israel's possession of nuclear capabilities outside any international control and their indignation at some States' continued support for Israel's development of such capabilities in violation of their obligations under relevant treaties.

212. The decision by the Arab States to postpone the submission of their draft resolution under the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities until the next session was a gesture of good will in support of the efforts of a number of States to boost the prospects of success of the conference on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to be held in 2012 and of the forum to be held in November 2011. The success of the 2012 conference depended on the seriousness of the nuclear-weapon States and on genuine political will on the part of Israel. In that connection, he noted that the intransigence of successive Israeli Governments had undermined the chances of success of such initiatives to date or doomed them to failure.

213. He noted that the representative of Israel had criticized Syria in a statement to the Conference the previous day[2] but had ignored the fact that Israel had occupied Syrian and Lebanese territory for decades and had violated international law on a daily basis through its blockade, segregation, displacement, oppression and killing of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese people. The representative of Israel likewise had ignored the fact that Israel's nuclear activities were not subject to any international oversight, that its huge military nuclear arsenal posed a threat not only to the countries of the region but to the world as a whole, and that its refusal to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State doomed all relevant initiatives to failure.

214. Syria valued the side events organized by the Agency during the General Conference addressing such issues as water resources and nuclear safety. He encouraged the Agency to pay increased attention to water, food and health security and in particular to assist developing countries in addressing the devastating economic and human consequences of water shortages.

215. The Atomic Energy Commission of Syria had served as the executive secretariat for the States party to ARASIA since 2003. Syria had hosted the annual meeting of the ARASIA Board of Representatives in early 2011, at which a programme framework had been adopted for cooperation covering the period 2012–2017, along with a study of all regional projects in the areas of agriculture, health, nuclear reactor safety and industrial safety.

216. He thanked the Agency for its invaluable contribution to the success of projects under the technical cooperation programme. Syria provided a great deal of support to the programme through its specialized bodies, both under ARASIA and through other regional activities conducted by the Agency. His country looked forward to increased Agency support for the transfer of nuclear science and technology, especially to developing countries whose needs in that area were steadily increasing.

217. Finally, he noted that the 2010 NPT Review Conference had reaffirmed the voluntary nature of a State's decision to sign an additional protocol and had drawn a distinction between that decision and the legal requirement for States party to the NPT to conclude a safeguards agreement.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

[2] See GC(55)/OR.4, paras 59–70.