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Record of the Third Meeting

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President: Mr BARROS OREIRO (Uruguay)
Later: Mr BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation)

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[1] GC(56)/19.

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(56)/INF/9.

Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECAS	Enhancing Capabilities of the Safeguards Analytical Services
EU3+3	China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIF	Generation IV International Forum
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
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

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
R&D	research and development
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SIT	sterile insect technique
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UN	United Nations

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2011 (continued)
(GC(56)/2 and Supplement)

1. Mr SANDA (Niger) said that his country had been producing uranium since 1970 and was now the second largest producer in the world. Given the strategic nature of the ore, Niger was aware that such a status entailed heightened responsibility and the need for strengthened cooperation. It therefore intended to work transparently, in complete synergy with the Agency and the international community, to ensure that nuclear energy remained one of the main factors in developing a world free from all threats.

2. His country was fully committed to the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and the Agency's objectives in the fields of nuclear safety, security and safeguards and radiation protection and, in that connection, had set up the National Radiation Protection Centre several years previously. He noted the international development prospects for nuclear energy despite the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

3. Throughout its long history of cooperation with the Agency, Niger had acquired practical experience which had enabled it to achieve significant progress towards national and international goals in relation to non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security and radiation protection. The Government had ratified the main legal instruments in that regard.

4. Niger wished to take advantage of the many opportunities offered by peaceful nuclear applications in order to promote development by combating poverty, addressing issues related to energy and health, and overcoming food insecurity, in particular through the 'Nigeriens feeding Nigeriens' initiative. Such objectives were perfectly in line with those of the Government's economic and social development plan for attaining the MDGs. As proof of his country's support for nuclear applications, a unit had been established under the Office of the President, involving all relevant stakeholders. Its aims were, inter alia, to gain a better understanding of the problems existing in that field, to propose solutions thereto, and to ensure that Niger played its role and benefited optimally from its participation in international structures.

5. The implementation of Niger's CPF for 2010–2015 was under way and positive results were being achieved. It focused on the sectors of mining, nuclear safety, security and safeguards, human health, agriculture and animal resources, sustainable energy development, water resource management, and human resources development in nuclear science and technology.

6. The Government of Niger was working together with PACT and other development partners such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Islamic Development Bank to implement its national cancer prevention programme. A centre for cancer treatment with sufficient technical capabilities and a radiotherapy unit was about to be opened, serving as a subregional reference centre for the comprehensive treatment of patients. He thanked the Agency, the Government of Italy, PACT and the Principality of Monaco for their contribution to training the centre's technical staff. Given the country's size and the growing number of cancer cases, a second centre would be required. A project to that end had been submitted through PACT and was currently being reviewed by the Islamic Development Bank.

7. Niger was requesting the Agency's assistance to embark upon a nuclear power programme to meet the electricity needs of the country and subregion. In that regard, it supported the Agency's

initiative encouraging countries that had already mastered the relevant technology to assist in its transfer and training so that more African States might add nuclear power to their energy mix.

8. With over 80% of its working population employed in the agriculture and stockbreeding sectors, Niger attached great importance to the cooperation programmes of the Agency, FAO and PATTEC aiming to increase agricultural and animal production. His country was grateful to Japan for its assistance in the rehabilitation of mining sites, and to the United States of America for its support through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. The use of nuclear techniques in the areas of insect control, improvement of crop varieties, nutrition, environmental protection and food preservation would help meet the challenges associated with food security and combating poverty. Isotopic techniques were being used to study the silting-up of the river Niger — a phenomenon that had been partially responsible for flooding that had killed numerous people and destroyed several hydro-agricultural facilities in the preceding year.

9. On the international level, his country welcomed developments in the use of SIT to combat mosquitoes that transmitted malaria — the principal cause of death in tropical countries. Niger welcomed the Agency's support for PATTEC and encouraged all Member States to mobilize sufficient resources to support the African Union's campaign against malaria, tsetse flies and trypanosomiasis.

10. Niger appreciated the Agency's assistance in regional and subregional programmes and reaffirmed its full commitment to AFRA, which had just been renewed for another five years.

11. Mr CHO Yul-Rae (Republic of Korea) said that in the preceding year, the international community had exerted strenuous efforts to find safer and more sustainable ways to secure the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Despite growing public concerns over nuclear safety in the wake of the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, nuclear energy remained the most viable and practical option to respond to the rapid growth in energy demand, climate change and the depletion of fossil fuels and his country therefore commended all efforts by the Agency and its Member States to expand and advance its use.

12. For the preceding four decades nuclear energy had been one of the main forms of power fuelling his country's development. It currently had 23 nuclear power plants in operation, with nuclear power accounting for 30% of total electricity generation. The Government spared no effort or resources in supporting R&D activities to ensure that nuclear power continued to serve as a sustainable energy source. Its efforts had paid off in July 2012 when the Republic of Korea had obtained standard design approval for the System-Integrated Modular Advanced Reactor (SMART). His country hoped that the SMART design could be used more widely for small and medium sized reactors, and that it could share its experience to assist other Member States. In addition, the Republic of Korea had been developing a closed nuclear fuel cycle that combined pyroprocessing technology, which recycled and reduced radioactive waste, with the sodium-cooled fast reactor. It had also been engaged in developing safer and more innovative nuclear energy systems and participated actively in international collaborative research projects such as GIF and INPRO. More Member States should consider joining such global initiatives to ensure a bright future for nuclear energy.

13. Radiation technology was enjoying renewed appreciation, owing to its potential to improve human lives through advances in medicine, agriculture, industry, food and the environment. The Government of the Republic of Korea had just launched a five-year radiation technology promotion plan focusing on research in radiopharmaceuticals, neutron science, radiation fusion technology, radiotherapy equipment and radioisotope production. In 2012, his country had embarked on a project to build a research reactor aimed at ensuring a stable supply of medical isotopes. In addition, the

Advanced Radiation Technology Institute, which was a designated Agency Collaborating Centre, would benefit the international community through its research and training programmes.

14. The Government and the private sector in his country participated in PACT and the Republic of Korea was working with a number of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region to introduce technologies that would improve cancer diagnosis and treatment. In 2011, it had contributed US $800 000 to the Peaceful Uses Initiative, and would be contributing a further $2.5 million thereto over the subsequent three years.

15. The Fukushima accident had been a solemn reminder that safety was, and would always be, a priority and requirement for the sustainable development of nuclear energy. After the accident, the Agency had led international cooperation to improve nuclear safety, inter alia, through the adoption of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the creation of a taskforce to implement the sub-actions thereof, and the holding of international conferences for experts. In the wake of the Fukushima accident, the Republic of Korea had conducted stress tests on all of its nuclear power plants in operation to check for potential vulnerabilities. It was also taking follow-up actions in response to the recommendations from the IRRS mission conducted in July 2011. In October 2011, in order to further enhance the national safety framework, the Government had set up the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission as an independent regulatory body reporting directly to the President.

16. The Republic of Korea had contributed to global efforts to strengthen nuclear security by hosting the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul in March 2012. The Seoul Communiqué, adopted at the Summit, had set out commitments and visions to prevent nuclear and radiological terrorism and had repeatedly highlighted the central role of the Agency and the need to strengthen further its nuclear security activities. The Republic of Korea had made several meaningful commitments at the Summit and had also launched a pilot project to support developing countries in building a system to track radiological materials. The country had increased its financial contribution to the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund to $1 million in 2012.

17. With respect to nuclear safeguards, in June 2012 the Republic of Korea and the Agency had concluded arrangements for enhanced cooperation on the implementation of integrated safeguards, in line with the Agency's long-term strategy.

18. He expressed his country's concern that the DPRK, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic were continuing in their non-compliance with safeguards obligations. The DPRK's pursuit of a nuclear programme undermined the foundation of the international non-proliferation regime and posed a serious threat to the peace and stability of north-east Asia. The Republic of Korea had cooperated closely with the other participants in the six-party talks to find a peaceful resolution of the issue and had thus contributed to the February 2012 agreement reached between the United States of America and the DPRK. However, by launching a long-range missile on 13 April 2012 in direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), the DPRK had quickly broken that agreement. The DPRK must realize that any further provocations would be met with a coordinated and resolute response by the international community.

19. As the body that ensured the full application of nuclear safeguards, the Agency should not tolerate the DPRK's continued development of its nuclear programme. In that regard, the Republic of Korea hoped that the General Conference would adopt unanimously the draft resolution on the implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the DPRK. His country urged the DPRK to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with its obligations under Security Council resolutions, and to comply fully with its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations. The Republic of

Korea held the Agency's efforts in relation to the DPRK nuclear issue in high regard and believed that the Agency should play a crucial role in the monitoring and verification of the situation.

20. Mr MOVSISYAN (Armenia) said that his country's cooperation with the Agency in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was developing continuously, with the Agency providing support in many areas, including nuclear power and nuclear medicine.

21. Events in the modern world were giving rise to questions about what additional steps should be taken to make the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes safer. Armenia therefore supported the draft resolution proposed by the European Union on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system and application of the Model Addition Protocol. With a view to further improving safety at nuclear power plants, it also welcomed the proposal made by Member States to amend the Convention on Nuclear Safety and supported the initiative to strengthen the application of that Convention by amending its procedures and guidelines.

22. For the further development of nuclear power, the non-proliferation regime was of great importance, as was the application of NPT safeguards, which could be ensured either through international agreements or by improving domestic legislation. Armenia met its obligations under the safeguards agreement and additional protocol and submitted the proper reports and declarations in a timely manner. It welcomed the ongoing assistance of the Department of Safeguards in that regard. His country was continually improving its national legislation and had made appropriate amendments to its law on the safe use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes related to nuclear material accounting and control. It had also taken the necessary steps to ratify the 2005 amendment to the CPPNM, and that process would soon be complete.

23. Armenia's nuclear power programme occupied a key place in the national energy strategy. Only by including nuclear power in its energy mix could the country maintain a sufficient degree of energy security and independence. In 2011, public consultations had been held on a document evaluating the environmental effects of a new nuclear power unit. A version of the document incorporating suggestions and recommendations made during the consultations had been submitted to the Ministry of Nature Protection. The Ministry had reacted positively to the document and suggested that it be amended as appropriate once the technical plans for building the new unit had been prepared. The public report had been freely available on the official websites of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Nature Protection since 2010. During that time, no comments or suggestions regarding the environmental impact of building a new unit had been submitted by Armenia's neighbouring countries. However, some were using various platforms to make political statements on that subject. He emphasized that his country adhered strictly to its obligations under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and that all phases of work had been carried out in strict accordance with the procedures set out therein.

24. With assistance from the Agency and international experts, extensive work had been undertaken to improve the seismic safety of the existing unit at the Armenian nuclear power plant. During planned maintenance work in 2012, support structures would be installed to increase the seismic resistance of buildings and equipment. Modelling of various types of incidents and emergencies had shown that the plant met the design standards for seismic resistance. Armenia appreciated the assistance it had received from the Department of Technical Cooperation in assessing the final version of the report to evaluate the seismic and volcanic safety of the plant with a view to constructing a new unit. Following a mission to that end in September 2011, Agency experts had noted the high quality of the work already undertaken. Armenia had also conducted stress tests on the existing unit and would submit the final report to the European Union early in 2013.

25. On the recommendation of the OSART mission conducted in 2011, the programme to improve the operational safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant had been reviewed. The suggestions and recommendations made by the OSART mission had now begun to be implemented at the plant. He expressed appreciation to the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security for its assistance in that regard and in improving the level of design safety at the existing power plant. He also thanked the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Italy and the European Union for their help in improving operational and design safety at the plant. In April 2012, his Government had decided to extend the operating life of the existing unit until the commissioning of the replacement unit. A programme to that end would be prepared by the end of 2013.

26. In the second half of 2012, it was planned to develop a radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel management strategy with European Union experts. Armenia was also taking the necessary measures to ratify the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

27. Armenia supported the Director General's initiative to publish the results of Agency missions to its nuclear power plant, in accordance with the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety adopted in 2011. However, despite such openness, some neighbouring countries continued to accuse it of concealing information about the safety of its nuclear plant, even though it was under permanent State supervision. In December 2011, the Armenian Presidential Council for Nuclear Energy Safety, the members of which were internationally recognized experts and academics, had held its thirteenth meeting. In addition, the Agency coordinated international assistance to improve safety at the plant. The fifth technical meeting on that subject, held in Vienna in October 2011, had examined the part that Armenia and donor countries could play in improving the safety of the existing unit.

28. He underlined his country's willingness to participate in joint INPRO projects, particularly those dealing with the problems of developing nuclear power in small countries and designing small and medium sized reactors. As an active member of INPRO, Armenia had suggested the preparation of a technical document on introducing nuclear power in countries with small power grids. The document, which would be published soon, covered the problems associated with spent nuclear fuel, radioactive waste management, the power of nuclear power plant units and the capacity of power grids. In that connection, he thanked the Department of Nuclear Energy for assisting Member States in developing nuclear power.

29. Armenia was pursuing cooperation with various countries in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. In the near future, agreements on that subject would be signed with Slovakia, Belarus, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. A memorandum of understanding on energy, including nuclear energy, would also be signed with the Government of the United States.

30. Finally, he thanked the Director General for his official visit to Armenia, his meeting with the country's leadership and his discussions on the development of nuclear power in Armenia.

31. Mr MBARAWA (United Republic of Tanzania) expressed appreciation for the message of the United Nations Secretary-General, in particular with regard to the formulation of appropriate strategies for the advancement of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and the control, if not the total elimination, of nuclear weapons proliferation.

32. The Agency's Member States needed to coordinate their efforts to improve nuclear safety standards, enhance radiological emergency response and ensure the safe use of nuclear energy for development. Tanzania highly valued the role of the technical cooperation programme in ensuring the safe use of nuclear technologies and thanked the Agency for its continued support of nuclear technology applications in the areas of human health, agriculture, livestock development, water

resource management, industry and energy, which had significantly contributed to stimulating economic activities in those fields. The Agency's technical cooperation programme in Tanzania had consistently focused on end-user oriented activities that had a visible socio-economic impact, consistent with government priorities. Efforts in that regard were to be stepped up in the future, and his Government was committed to developing an adequate strategy for the implementation and sustainability of all relevant national activities.

33. Tanzania had also been actively involved in the regional cooperation programme, having provided experts to participate in various regional missions, and resources to host regional events. In 2012, it had hosted eight regional events in the fields of nuclear security, radiation safety, energy planning, radiation processes, food safety, safety in uranium mining and project design.

34. His country valued the Agency's long-standing commitment to assist its national cancer control programme, particularly in the areas of nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and human resource development. It had helped the country to establish its second cancer centre, the Bugando Medical Centre, thus relieving the burden at the only other cancer centre there — the Ocean Road Cancer Institute. The latter had also received a new cobalt-60 teletherapy machine, a cobalt-60 brachytherapy machine, a new treatment simulator and a dual-head gamma camera from the Agency. In addition, the Agency was helping Tanzania to build the capacities of its human resources through training programmes, fellowships, scientific visits and local degree-level programmes in therapeutic radiography and clinical oncology, as well as through the Virtual University for Cancer Control. Thus far, Agency assistance had increased treatment capabilities by about 50%, enabling 4000 patients to be treated annually. The objective was to continue partnering with the Agency to strengthen the existing cancer therapy centres and establish new centres in the country's four zones.

35. Tanzania would commence uranium mining in the near future. The Government guaranteed compliance with the relevant safety measures at all stages of work and would continue to seek Agency assistance in that regard. It had enacted a regulation to ensure safe practices and the protection of the public and the environment and was committed to building the capacity needed for the effective implementation of projects and complying with its obligations under the Agency's agreements and conventions. Tanzania also reaffirmed its commitment to African regional cooperation under AFRA and urged other Member States to support that initiative.

36. With the successful eradication of rinderpest in May 2007, Tanzania's livestock industry was becoming an increasingly important contributor to improving the livelihood of the population and the national economy. The Agency, in collaboration with FAO, the European Union and other development partners, had been instrumental in that success and had also been involved in the diagnosis and control of other diseases. The R&D, capacity-building and analytical services provided by the Agency's nuclear science and applications laboratories in Seibersdorf over the preceding 50 years had been of great use to Member States. Tanzania supported the Agency's efforts to bring those laboratories into line with the latest international standards in the coming years.

37. The transfer of technology to Tanzania under its CPF had yielded important benefits. However, the utilization of nuclear techniques had been hampered by a lack of personnel with the requisite knowledge and skills in the fields of health, agriculture, livestock development, industrial applications, energy and the environment. In an effort to address the situation, Tanzania would seek to join the Global Safety Assessment Network in order to benefit from the expertise of institutes in other countries.

38. He reaffirmed his Government's commitment to meeting its obligations and supporting the Agency's efforts to realize its mandated objectives. In that connection, Tanzania pledged its full share of the TCF target.

39. Ms HERKES (Germany) said that, in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident, her country had reconsidered the role of nuclear energy in its national energy policy, and would gradually phase out all electricity production in its nuclear power plants by the end of 2022. Although that would pose a huge challenge to the national energy supply system, Germany was making good progress towards finding solutions. Its efforts to ensure an affordable and reliable energy supply would focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, grid expansion and storage technologies. Nevertheless, safe nuclear technology would remain highly important. Over the subsequent decade there would still be a considerable number of nuclear power plants in operation in her country, not to mention all the plants, both existing and under construction, in neighbouring countries. In the future, the decommissioning of nuclear facilities, interim storage and the final disposal of radioactive waste would become increasingly important issues. The Agency had a central role to play in that regard, and Germany would continue to cooperate constructively with the Secretariat and other Member States in the relevant forums.

40. Regarding the Agency's proposed Regular Budget for 2013, her country was a strong advocate of ensuring adequate funding to enable the Agency to undertake its tasks effectively. At the same time, it believed that resources must be spent efficiently, with a focus on priorities and possible savings. Ongoing global financial uncertainties, additional burdens on the national budget, and austerity measures in all areas had led Germany to require a zero growth policy in all international organizations. However, it remained willing to support the Agency where specific needs arose. Germany's overall assessment of the proposed budget was very positive, and it welcomed the attention given to prioritization, efficiency and quality management. The zero real growth for 2013 showed that the difficult financial environment had been taken into account. Looking ahead to subsequent budget cycles, Germany appreciated the commitment to continue, in principle, the zero growth policy, and it attached great importance to measures to improve transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, in terms of not only the budget, but also management; it welcomed the Director General's continued efforts in that regard.

41. She underlined the importance of an effective and efficient safeguards regime and recalled that her country funded one of the longest-standing national support programmes for Agency safeguards. Germany believed that a comprehensive safeguards agreement in conjunction with an additional protocol should be taken as the verification standard and urged all Member States that had not yet done so to conclude and ratify such agreements with the Agency. In the framework of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, her country stood ready to support activities aimed at universalizing the additional protocol.

42. The implementation of integrated safeguards in the framework of the additional protocol was not only effective, but was also an example of efforts to streamline costs and increase efficiency to the benefit of the Secretariat, Member States and the private sector. Her country would welcome further forward-looking initiatives of the Secretariat. Germany supported a State-level safeguards approach which took into account both the technical situation and the legal and institutional structures within a State.

43. Germany appreciated the efforts of the Director General and the Nuclear Safety Action Team to coordinate and assist the prompt and full implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. The Action Plan had initiated review processes at both international and national levels in various fields and deserved the full support of all Member States so that it could continue to enhance the nuclear safety regime worldwide. Her country would provide further support for the Agency's nuclear safety activities, especially in the field of emergency preparedness and response. An information system containing technical data on nuclear power plants would be a particularly valuable tool for enhancing emergency management. Germany was committed to international collaboration on research to improve the safety of nuclear installations.

44. At the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul in March 2012, participants had agreed that more needed to be done in order to prevent nuclear proliferation and to safeguard nuclear and radioactive materials from theft, sabotage, unauthorized access and illegal transfer. Germany's initiative to establish international standards for securing highly radioactive sources had received broad international support.

45. Over the preceding four years, her country had made large contributions to the Agency for nuclear security purposes, including €5 million for securing radioactive sources. Following a joint fact-finding mission in cooperation with the Agency's Office of Nuclear Security in May 2012, Germany was prepared to assist Libyan authorities in enhancing the security of their nuclear installations and highly radioactive sources. In 2011, her country had pledged another €2.5 million to ECAS, bringing its total contribution to that project to €7.5 million.

46. Germany highly valued the assistance provided to Member States through the Agency's technical cooperation programme, which brought about clear improvements in important areas such as health, especially cancer treatment, water resource management, agriculture and environmental protection. Her country would continue to do its utmost to support the Agency's efforts in that regard.

47. As a founding member of INPRO, Germany once again commended the project team for its work. INPRO provided a crucial platform upon which to exchange innovative approaches to nuclear infrastructure, with emphasis on the importance of long-term strategic planning and global dialogue. Germany would continue to support INPRO efforts to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear energy.

48. With regard to multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, LEU had been available from the reserve in Angarsk since February 2011, and the Agency's LEU bank was in the process of being established. That was a complex task, particularly in terms of future operational costs and preventing any distortion of the proper functioning of the nuclear fuel market. In the event that the Multilateral Enrichment Sanctuary Project proposed by Germany was taken up by a group of interested States, her country stood ready to assist in and facilitate its implementation.

49. Her country was encouraged by the results of the first Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The strengthening of the NPT regime and its implementation — a process in which the Agency played a pivotal role — was a priority for Germany, but much work lay ahead.

50. Important work was being done to prepare for the holding of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The success of the conference would depend on impetus from the region itself. Any action that might endanger its success, such as the tabling of a General Conference resolution which singled out Israel, should be avoided.

51. Germany welcomed the latest Board resolutions on the DPRK, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic. It was very concerning that Iran had not taken any steps to dispel the serious doubts regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. On the contrary, by installing more centrifuges in Fordow and expanding its 20% enrichment capacity, it had increased concerns. Questions regarding the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programme remained unanswered and the Director General's latest report had stated once again that the Agency was not able to verify the absence of undeclared activities in that country. At their meetings with Iran in Baghdad and Moscow, the EU3+3 had submitted a constructive and balanced offer to Iran for a first set of confidence building steps. Germany called on Iran to engage seriously with the EU3+3 and to cooperate fully with the Agency, in line with the resolution adopted by the Board of Governors the

previous week.[2] Germany was exploring all options for a negotiated solution to the issue but if Iran continued to refuse to cooperate, it was prepared to step up the pressure: it would not accept an Iran with nuclear weapons.

52. Germany also remained deeply concerned by the nuclear weapons programme pursued by the DPRK. Unfortunately, recent events had increased doubts as to whether that country was prepared to give up its programme. The readmission of Agency inspectors would be a positive sign. In that connection, Germany called upon all States concerned to comply strictly with their obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1874 (2009).

53. In 2011, the Board of Governors had found Syria to be in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement. Germany urged Syria to live up to its promise and cooperate fully with the Agency in order to clarify all outstanding questions concerning its nuclear programme.

54. Mr HAMID (Sudan) emphasized the importance of the Agency's role not only in implementing the safeguards regime and creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, but also in ensuring that the benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes were available to all Member States in areas such as agriculture, food security, health, water, the environment and human resources development. His country appreciated the Agency's activities in support of economic and social development projects in developing countries.

55. The fact that Member States were eager to embark on nuclear energy programmes notwithstanding the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant demonstrated that there was no alternative to the use of clean and safe nuclear energy for economic development, environmental protection and the elimination of all forms of pollution stemming from other energy sources. The Sudanese Government was continuing to implement its national nuclear programme and looked forward to closer cooperation with the Agency in that regard.

56. Sudan welcomed the progress made in implementing the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and hoped that the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety to be held in Japan would constitute a further step towards the strengthening of nuclear safety, enabling all participants to benefit from the lessons learned in that area.

57. His country intended to adopt the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Moreover, the Ministry of Science and Communications had decided to separate the authority responsible for regulating nuclear and radiation activities from the users and promoters of nuclear energy. It had also created a national committee, which had submitted a draft law on nuclear energy to the Agency's Office of Legal Affairs. The comments received would be reflected in the draft, which would then be submitted to the relevant authorities for enactment, hopefully by the end of 2012. Sudan would then have completed all the legal and administrative procedures relating to the establishment of an independent regulatory authority.

58. In February 2012, in cooperation with the Agency, his country had launched a project on the use of SIT to combat malaria-transmitting mosquitoes. Sudan had received a loan from the Islamic Development Bank to establish the necessary infrastructure and the Agency was providing training, expertise and some of the necessary equipment. The success of the project would serve as an example for other regions seeking to combat that disease, which had impeded economic development in many developing countries.

[2] contained in document GOV/2012/50.

59. In April 2012, Sudan had received an imPACT mission, which had worked successfully with a national technical group and relevant health specialists. The mission report had been studied by Sudanese technical experts and its recommendations would be implemented in accordance with a fixed timetable. His country had also participated in a meeting between the Agency and the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah in September 2012 concerning the provision of assistance to African countries in building their cancer treatment capacities.

60. Under its project aimed at increasing crop productivity using nuclear-related techniques, Sudan had produced two types of genetically improved tomato, for which the relevant authorities had decided to move from the experimental to the agricultural phase. Greenhouses had also been built for the production of improved varieties of maize and wheat that were resistant to drought and high temperatures.

61. For the 2014–2015 technical cooperation cycle, Sudan had focused on five main areas: nuclear energy, human health, agriculture, water resources and radiation protection. One project aimed to ensure food security and improve living conditions by increasing crop productivity through improved agricultural techniques and crop management, while another sought to achieve food security by improving the productivity of animal resources. There was also a project to improve and expand radiotherapy services and nuclear medicine and to promote regular maintenance of equipment, and another to address health and environmental risks by preventing the pollution of groundwater.

62. In preparing Sudan's CPF for 2014–2019, there had been coordination among the authorities responsible for the country's sustainable development priorities, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Animal Resources, the ministries responsible for electricity and water resources, and various specialized centres and institutions. The UNDP had also been assisting in its update.

63. Sudan played an active role in the planning and implementation of AFRA projects, which had proved highly successful. It had hosted a regional event under the auspices of AFRA and would host further events before the end of the year. It had also received a number of expert visits under AFRA projects.

64. His country would host the Eleventh Arab Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in December 2012. He invited the Director General to attend the Conference, at which extremely important scientific issues would be discussed.

65. Sudan complied fully with all its obligations under the relevant international instruments that it had ratified and urged all States that had not yet done so to ratify them at the earliest opportunity with a view to creating a climate conducive to peace and sustainable development. It supported the Agency's review of the instruments deposited with it and encouraged the continuation of such activities in the future. The Sudanese committee that studied the existing legal instruments to coordinate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had submitted a report that was currently being studied by the competent authorities.

66. Aware of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, nearly all States in the region had acceded to the NPT and demonstrated their resolve to take practical steps towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The exception was Israel, which continued to challenge the international community by refusing to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, and by rejecting all international initiatives in that connection. Its conduct was impeding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and Sudan therefore called for action to compel Israel to accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to Agency verification as called for in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. He emphasized the need to maintain the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference, since the Agency was the technical body responsible for nuclear verification.

67. The decision had been taken to convene an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Sudan trusted that all concerned parties would attend the conference. The Agency had been tasked with preparing the reference documents for the conference. His country welcomed the forum in that regard held by the Agency in November 2011 and hoped that the outcome of its deliberations would contribute to the success of the 2012 conference. Current international efforts aimed at establishing such a zone in the Middle East seemed to lack the necessary conviction, and Sudan therefore urged the relevant international bodies to waste no time in taking serious steps towards achieving that goal and ensuring the success of the forthcoming conference. A successful outcome would boost the non-proliferation regime and thus promote international peace and security.

68. Mr SWARTZ (Botswana) expressed support for the tireless efforts of the Director General and his team in ensuring that nuclear technology was used for peaceful purposes. Such technology continued to play a pivotal role in improving the lives of the less privileged throughout the world, particularly in the fields of agriculture and health.

69. His country had signed a number of Agency instruments. In the past year alone, Botswana had acceded to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, accepted the INSSP, and deposited its instrument of acceptance of the fourth extension of AFRA. It had also submitted five project concepts for the 2014–2015 technical cooperation cycle in relation to its CPF for 2011–2016.

70. He expressed appreciation to the Agency for its technical cooperation programme and the projects that were being implemented for the benefit of the people of Botswana, along with the warm and cordial relations between the Agency and his country. Such cooperation should be continued and strengthened, as Botswana critically needed support and assistance in the acquisition, adoption, adaptation and use of appropriate nuclear technologies to catalyse economic development, reduce poverty and increase its chances of achieving the MDGs and its national vision.

71. Botswana participated in AFRA, which brought immense benefits in the fields of agriculture, health, uranium mining and waste management, inter alia. He thanked the Agency for its generous support in that regard and the AFRA Field Management Committee for its dedication in running the programme. The successes achieved and the contribution made towards poverty reduction through national and regional Agency projects and AFRA projects implemented in Botswana had greatly increased the population's awareness of the benefits of harnessing nuclear technologies.

72. Botswana had met its obligations in contributing to the TCF and hosting Agency activities. It had hosted two training courses and one workshop in 2012, and would continue to support Agency activities both regionally and internationally. As the cornerstone for advancing nuclear technology in the Africa region, AFRA needed to receive full funding. He therefore encouraged Member States and their donors to pay their assessed contributions, as his country had done.

73. His country greatly appreciated the Agency's growing attention to cancer therapy in developing countries, especially through PACT, which sought to increase the Agency's capacity to assist Member States in providing cancer treatment and care. Botswana was following the programme with keen interest and looked forward to the imPACT mission it would receive in 2013.

74. Botswana believed in the peaceful uses of atomic energy for all humankind and upheld the principles promulgated by NPT safeguards agreements and additional protocols. It therefore encouraged all Member States to adhere to the provisions enshrined therein. He noted the Agency's important role in promoting and facilitating cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The safeguards system allowed States to demonstrate their commitment to the use of nuclear energy for

peaceful purposes and further reinforced confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear activities, making the possibility of a secure and safe future a reality.

75. Mr VAIČIŪNAS (Lithuania) said that the Fukushima accident had changed the global political agenda, placing much greater emphasis on nuclear safety and security. Many actions had already been taken to increase nuclear safety worldwide.

76. Nuclear energy was an important part of Lithuania's energy mix but it had to be developed in accordance with the highest international safety standards, since nuclear accidents had transboundary consequences. The European Union had been carrying out comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments in the nuclear power plants of all its members. In addition, seven countries neighbouring the European Union had voluntarily agreed to participate in the stress test process, although not all of them had fully cooperated to date.

77. The Agency had a vital role to play in strengthening the global nuclear safety and security framework. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety defined a number of actions for enhancing nuclear safety worldwide. Lithuania welcomed the progress made in implementing the Action Plan, with steps being taken to assess nuclear safety, enhance the effectiveness of Agency peer review missions, strengthen regulatory bodies and review Agency safety standards and the international emergency preparedness framework.

78. His country encouraged all Member States to carry out comprehensive safety assessments of their existing nuclear power plants as well as those under construction or planned. It urged them to make regular use of Agency peer reviews and follow-up missions on regulatory effectiveness, operational safety, site and design safety and emergency preparedness. It would be to the benefit of all if the results of Agency missions were made publicly available.

79. International nuclear safety and security standards should be universal and applied unreservedly. His country was pleased that the Agency's safety standards were being reviewed and stressed the need for countries to incorporate international safety standards into their national legislation to make them legally binding. Every State had the right to develop nuclear energy, but that right entailed the associated obligations. Any national decisions in that regard should take into consideration possible implications for the region, in particular close neighbours. Although nuclear safety and security were time consuming and expensive, mistakes were too costly to be allowed. Nuclear infrastructure, including human resources, should be subject to comprehensive assessments, including through Agency missions.

80. Lithuania's Visaginas nuclear power plant project was progressing well; the plant was intended to supply energy to all the Baltic countries. A strategic investor had been selected and a decision taken to use advanced boiling water reactor technology. The European Commission had concluded that the project was in compliance with the Euratom Treaty and that it would help to ensure security of energy supply in the Baltic region and fully integrate Baltic States into the internal European energy market. The European Commission had also stressed that the Visaginas nuclear power plant must comply with the basic safety principles set out in the European Union's nuclear safety directive and had welcomed Lithuania's commitment to perform stress tests as part of the licensing process. In June 2012, the Parliament of Lithuania had approved a number of laws to create a favourable investment environment and facilitate the establishment of the company that would operate the plant in the future and the signing of project agreements. All the major technical preparations for the project, including an environmental impact assessment, a transport study, territorial planning and a site assessment in accordance with Agency safety requirements, had been completed. The Agency missions to assess the environmental impact and evaluate the site had provided positive and valuable feedback. Lithuania welcomed the comprehensive and competent support provided by the Agency, in particular in

enhancing the country's technical and organizational capabilities to prepare for the licensing and construction of the Visaginas nuclear power plant.

81. Following the Fukushima accident, his country had taken steps to strengthen its legal regime relating to nuclear or radiological emergency preparedness and response. Standards to protect the public in such an event and a plan for the protection of residents in the event of a nuclear accident had been approved, taking into account Agency recommendations.

82. In 2012, Lithuania had updated the final decommissioning plan for the Ignalina nuclear power plant, which had terminated its commercial operation in 2009. Under the plan, all decommissioning support facilities and infrastructure would be constructed by 2018, the defuelling of both units would be finalized by 2019, and the decommissioning of the plant would be completed by 2029, subject to financial resources. The reactor of the first unit had already been fully defuelled, while the defuelling of the second unit was in progress. All decommissioning activities were being carried out in accordance with the projects and programmes agreed upon with the nuclear regulatory authority and all the necessary technical and management measures had been taken to assure safety in that work. As spent nuclear fuel was still present at the plant site, European stress tests had been conducted on both the shut-down units, the existing spent fuel storage facility and the new one under construction. The results of the stress tests had revealed a sufficient level of preparedness for emergencies and the Ignalina plant design had been shown to protect adequately against external events.

83. Lithuania continued to work to improve its radiation protection infrastructure to achieve optimal public protection and minimize medical exposure. National diagnostic reference levels had been established for radiography, fluoroscopy, mammography and computed tomography, but public concerns still remained. Lithuania hoped to cooperate with the Agency in optimizing and introducing new medical technologies.

84. Alongside the stress tests it had been performing, the European Union was assessing the nuclear security of the nuclear power plants in its member countries. It had identified 32 good practices which his country was working to implement as part of its national nuclear security regime.

85. Lithuania's legal requirements for the physical protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear materials had been reviewed and amended, taking into account the amendment to the CPPNM and corresponding Agency recommendations.

86. In April 2012, Lithuania had established a nuclear security centre of excellence which focused on the organization of training, specialized seminars and nuclear security simulation exercises, including actions to counter nuclear smuggling. The centre was part of the Agency's International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres.

87. He reaffirmed his country's full support for the work of the Illicit Trafficking Database. The collection, evaluation, use and dissemination of information in that field helped strengthen nuclear security worldwide and prevent nuclear and radiological terrorism.

88. Since it had joined the Agency, technical cooperation had played a key role in enhancing Lithuania's nuclear energy infrastructure. In cooperation with the Agency, Lithuania was conducting six national projects in the fields of human health, radioactive waste management, nuclear energy development, institutional capacity building and radiation protection. It was currently in the process of finalizing its CPF for 2012–2017, which would be signed soon.

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

89. Mr MIKHADYUK (Belarus) said that, in view of States' growing interest in the safe development of nuclear power, nuclear applications for socio-economic development and the

containment of nuclear proliferation and terrorism, the Agency played a particularly important role as the international organization with the most authority in those areas. At the same time, its ability to fulfil its statutory functions depended largely on the engagement of Member States.

90. In order to promote confidence in nuclear power, States needed to ensure painstaking compliance with nuclear safety norms and standards and display openness and willingness to cooperate with all stakeholders. While States were responsible for ensuring nuclear safety, the Agency must play a pivotal role in coordinating the necessary international cooperation. His country noted the Secretariat's active work with Member States in implementing the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which was a promising basis for strengthening the global nuclear safety regime. In that connection, he stressed the significance of the universal application and ongoing improvement of international legal instruments such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety and Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. Belarus supported the initiative of the Russian Federation to improve the implementation of those Conventions by introducing amendments based on the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident.

91. In the light of high energy demand, the lack of domestic resources and the resulting dependence on foreign suppliers, as well as the instability of the global markets, the Government of Belarus had decided to construct a nuclear power plant. It was working closely with the supplier, the Russian Federation, and a contract had been signed in July 2012 for the construction of the plant. Preparatory work was currently under way at the site. The country's nuclear power programme was being implemented in strict accordance with Agency standards and recommendations, and with advisory and expert assistance, including various Agency missions. An INIR mission in June 2012 had made various proposals and recommendations regarding infrastructure development. It had also identified good practices that would be recommended to other States planning the construction of a nuclear power plant and had concluded that Belarus was making significant progress towards the introduction of nuclear power. His country would be guided by the mission's findings in its ongoing work. In implementing its nuclear programme, Belarus complied fully with its obligations under international conventions and agreements. He thanked the Director General for his visit to Belarus in April 2012, which had given further impetus to cooperation with the Agency.

92. With regard to its technical cooperation programme, Belarus' CPF for 2008–2013 focused on the development of its nuclear power infrastructure, the use of nuclear technologies in health care, and the rehabilitation of areas affected by the Chernobyl accident. Belarus noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of national projects on training staff for a nuclear power programme and on strengthening its regulatory authority, as well as the successful conclusion of the project on improving medical services in the Chernobyl-affected territories with the introduction of a single mode linear accelerator. Further cooperation with the Agency on the remediation of contaminated land would fit in well with the United Nations Chernobyl strategy, which envisaged the transition of the affected regions to sustainable socio-economic development. In that connection, he hoped that provisions for Agency assistance to the countries most affected by the Chernobyl disaster would continue to be included in the General Conference resolution on strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities.

93. Belarus demonstrated its support for the technical cooperation programme by paying its TCF contributions in full and on time, and it had pledged to pay its full share for 2013.

94. With the Agency's assistance, an integrated action plan was being implemented in Belarus to strengthen nuclear security and the physical protection of nuclear material at national and regional level. His country would also receive an IPPAS mission in 2013.

95. Given the importance of the Agency's role in coordinating global efforts aimed at strengthening nuclear security and preventing nuclear terrorism, it was vital that more States accede to and implement the relevant international legal instruments in that regard, including the CPPNM and the amendment thereto.

96. A proponent of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Belarus rigorously met its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement. It attached great importance to strengthening the Agency's safeguards system, and believed that the additional protocol should constitute the verification standard. His country intended to conclude the necessary internal procedures for the ratification of the additional protocol.

97. Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia) said that, in accordance with the unified European Union energy policy, her country's new Government intended to ensure the speedy completion of Units 3 and 4 of the Mochovce nuclear power plant and to increase preparedness for the construction of a new nuclear power source. An optimal and well-balanced energy mix, with an emphasis on low-carbon technologies, was one of the most important pillars of her country's energy policy.

98. The main priority in the peaceful use of nuclear energy was to maintain a high level of safety in nuclear installations. Her country had supported the European Union nuclear safety stress tests which had been completed in June 2012. The final report of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group had confirmed a high level of safety in Slovakia's nuclear power plants and recommended the continuation of measures to increase safety levels that had been adopted even before the Fukushima nuclear accident, in particular those related to severe accident management. Slovakia was now elaborating a national action plan to address the findings and recommendations of the stress tests, conduct follow-up fact-finding site visits, increase off-site emergency preparedness, and ensure transparency and public involvement.

99. In 2012, Slovakia had hosted an IRRS mission to review the effectiveness of its regulatory framework for nuclear safety and radiation protection at nuclear installations, bearing in mind the implications of the Fukushima accident. The IRRS team had reviewed and identified a number of good practices, highlighting the independence of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic and the well-organized, open and transparent conduct of its regulatory processes. It had also made recommendations as to where improvements could be made, which had been thoroughly analysed and an action plan drawn up for their implementation. A follow-up mission was expected in 2015 to assess the progress made.

100. In June 2012, an OSART mission had been conducted at the Bohunice V-2 nuclear power plant as a follow-up to a mission in November 2010. The areas of management, organization and administration, operations, maintenance, technical support, operating experience, radiation protection, chemistry, emergency planning and preparedness, and long-term operation had been reviewed, and the progress achieved in all was found to be complete or satisfactory.

101. At the fourth review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management held in Vienna in May 2012, Slovakia had presented its national report and replied to 94 written questions. Several of the country's good practices had been noted, including the successful implementation of its plan for the centralized collection, sorting and storage of institutional radioactive waste and orphan sources, the effective decommissioning of Units 1 and 2 of the Bohunice nuclear power plant, and the country's extensive and open international cooperation. The high level of safety in spent fuel and radioactive waste management in Slovakia had also been confirmed. Subsequently, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic had invited the relevant Slovak organizations to adopt measures to implement the meeting's conclusions.

102. The second extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in August 2012 had reviewed and discussed the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident and reviewed the provisions of the Convention. Slovakia had submitted a special national report to the meeting in which it had described in detail the measures implemented and lessons learned from the accident. Slovakia was preparing a national action plan based on the outcomes of that meeting and the European stress tests.

103. Nuclear safety was a national responsibility, and the existing framework of international legal instruments provided an adequate base for preserving and increasing nuclear safety, both nationally and internationally. Slovakia supported any measure leading to the accession by countries embarking on nuclear power programmes to the relevant international conventions, in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention. Slovakia stood ready to discuss measures to strengthen the implementation of those conventions.

104. Her country had welcomed the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security held in New York in September 2011, in particular its call for the prompt performance of national reviews of emergency preparedness and response arrangements and capabilities. In that connection, and pursuant to the fifth review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in 2011, the Slovak Government had approved the conduct of a national exercise simulating a nuclear power plant accident to test horizontal and vertical coordination and cooperation in dealing with such an event, taking into consideration the experience gained from the Fukushima accident. The exercise would take place in October and the evaluation and conclusions would be available in December 2012.

105. Stressing the importance of technical cooperation with the Agency, she said that the Europe Region National Liaison Officers Meeting had been held in Bratislava earlier that year. At the meeting, the implementation of the 2012–2013 regional projects had been reviewed and regional concepts for the 2014–2015 technical cooperation programme cycle had been considered. Slovakia stood ready to contribute to the technical cooperation programme by providing experts and training facilities, and accepting fellows and scientific visitors sponsored by the Agency.

106. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had significantly influenced her country's activities over the preceding 18 months. The more that was learned from rigorous analysis of the accident, the better the understanding which would be gained of the behaviour of nuclear power plants and materials under extremely unfavourable conditions; the lessons learned could then be taken into account in subsequent activities. The whole international community had tried to draw lessons from that tragic event in order to strengthen the safety of their nuclear installations and prevent similar accidents happening in the future. As Chairperson of the Agency's Commission on Safety Standards, she would make every effort to contribute to such activities. It was essential to implement the existing standards, norms and legal instruments as fully and effectively as possible and make appropriate use of the Agency's safety-related services. It should also be noted that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rested with operators and the States concerned.

107. Her country met all its international commitments and obligations as regards nuclear safety and was striving to make improvements in all relevant areas. During 2012, it had demonstrated its resolve at the fourth review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the second extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. At both meetings, the high level of safety and preparedness in the Czech Republic had been acknowledged. Her country ensured the periodic safety assessment of its nuclear installations, supplemented by independent peer reviews and Agency missions. By the end of 2012, the Czech Republic would have received five OSART

missions at its nuclear power plants, and preparations were under way for an IRRS mission in 2013. It had also provided experts for review teams to other countries.

108. In the light of the Fukushima accident, the Czech Republic had carried out an unprecedented risk and safety reassessment of its nuclear power plants, Dukovany and Temelín, as part of the European Union's stress tests. The checks had shown the plants' ability to withstand extreme external influences and highly improbable accidents, and had detected no major deficiencies that might affect their safe operation or that required immediate attention. However, possible measures to improve the robustness and safety of the plants had been identified and would be subject to detailed analysis and implementation under a national action plan that was being developed as a follow-up to the stress tests.

109. With a view to maintaining nuclear safety throughout the world, the Czech Republic had assisted other countries in that field by sharing its know-how and making voluntary contributions to priority activities, making it a net contributor to the Agency's technical cooperation programme. That programme remained a very valuable tool for development and collaboration among Member States, although the form of participation differed from country to country. The Czech Republic was planning to expand its nuclear programme but faced a lack of qualified experts. Through the technical cooperation programme, which offered a number of training and educational opportunities, it could reinforce its nuclear knowledge base substantially and create a new generation of nuclear specialists.

110. The need to promote the responsible use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes went hand in hand with the need to enhance nuclear security and minimize the risk of nuclear proliferation. Preventing, detecting and overcoming threats of misuse of nuclear materials and installations and combating nuclear terrorism required strong national measures and efficient international cooperation. Her country met all its obligations under the relevant international conventions, and had taken additional voluntary measures, such as adherence to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, to respond to the latest global developments. At the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, the Czech Republic had renewed its political commitment to achieving the shared goals of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Immediately thereafter, her country had hosted a conference entitled "The Prague Agenda — Accomplishments and Challenges" to explore the progress made in the three pillars of the Prague security agenda — arms control, non-proliferation and nuclear security — along with their interrelations.

111. The Czech Republic believed that stringent export controls played a crucial role in the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and radioactive sources and in the distribution of sensitive equipment and technologies. It therefore endorsed all efforts to strengthen policies, practices, international mechanisms and regimes in that area. It also strongly advocated the universal adoption and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, as the current verification standard.

112. The Agency played an indispensable role in nuclear non-proliferation, as emphasized during the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in May 2012 in Vienna. Her country continued to support the Agency's independent verification capabilities, both through its safeguards support programme and through direct funding. Earlier in 2012, it had provided a second extrabudgetary contribution of over 1 million korunas to the ECAS project.

113. Mr OSMAN (Bangladesh) said that his country had demonstrated its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation by signing such instruments as the NPT and the CTBT and concluding a safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the Agency. Firmly committed to comprehensive disarmament and to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, it welcomed the

conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction that was planned to be held later in 2012.

114. Fear of the risks of using nuclear power should not undermine the contribution it could make to humankind. Accidents had been rare and caused by inadequate technology, human error and unsafe site conditions. It was important to ensure the greatest possible benefits from nuclear technology by minimizing the security risks, and increasing public confidence through a greater focus on safety and security.

115. His Government was pursuing a vision of a digital Bangladesh with the aim of transforming it into a knowledge-based, technology-driven, middle-income country by 2021. That vision included programmes to eradicate poverty and hunger, ensure food and energy security, achieve environmental sustainability, combat killer diseases and create national capability to face the adverse effects of climate change. One of the tools to be used in achieving it was nuclear technology.

116. Cooperation with the Agency had benefited his country through the application of nuclear technology in various R&D activities, such as agricultural development and the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, including cancer. Nuclear power was considered a key part of the national energy mix. To meet growing demand and ensure universal electrification by 2021, the Government had decided to implement the Rooppur nuclear power plant project; it was planned that the plant would generate 2000 MW by 2020 and an additional 2000 MW by 2030. The necessary survey and investigations had been initiated, a law on establishing an independent regulatory authority enacted and an agreement signed with the vendor country, the Russian Federation. He expressed thanks to the Agency for its ongoing cooperation in that regard. Bangladesh was assigning top priority to radiation protection and nuclear safety and security in implementing the project. It 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. He called on vendor countries and the Agency to adopt special programmes for developing countries, especially for the LDCs, for whom nuclear power might be the most viable energy source.

117. The Government of Bangladesh took responsibility for ensuring the food, health and energy security of its people. It needed energy to meet the country's development needs and had found nuclear power to be the only cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution. In line with the Agency's focus on the application of nuclear science to provide more and safer food while conserving soil and water resources, nuclear technology was being used in Bangladesh in various agricultural applications including the development of saline-resistant, high-yielding varieties of rice.

118. He thanked the Agency for its support, through the technical cooperation programme and the RCA, for human resource development and capacity building in the use of nuclear techniques in various economic sectors in Bangladesh. He also expressed the hope that such invaluable assistance and cooperation would continue in the future.

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

120. Bangladesh recognized the need for a strengthened 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 Member States in the event of nuclear emergencies and further promote and expand the scope of the Agency's response to such emergencies.

121. Mr VINHAS (Brazil) said that, as a founding member and staunch supporter of the Agency, his country appreciated it's active participation in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. The Conference had included substantive discussions on the role of nuclear technology in sustainable development, in areas such as low-carbon electricity generation, food security, water management and oceans.

122. Also in the area of peaceful nuclear applications, Brazil acknowledged with great satisfaction the Director General's recent steps towards further strengthening the cooperation between the Agency and the FAO on food production and food security. Their joint efforts would help make further headway on combating the scourges of hunger and poverty worldwide, and the technical discussions to be held at the 2012 Scientific Forum would be of particular relevance.

123. The year 2012 marked the 45th anniversary of the Tlatelolco Treaty. At a ceremony in February, its 33 members had rekindled the hope that the pioneering nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean would continue to inspire other regions of the world. The confidence built in Latin America through that Treaty and ABACC could serve as a reference for other initiatives. It could be particularly beneficial to share the lessons learned and experience gained in the creation of the relevant legal and political frameworks with those involved in the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction planned to be held in Helsinki in December 2012.

124. The Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies was also celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2012. Its members had been striving to meet the highest nuclear safety and security standards at the national and regional levels and intended to continue exploring beneficial synergies between the Forum and the Agency.

125. A State party to the NPT for 15 years, Brazil reaffirmed its unswerving commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. While it harboured no illusions that a world free of nuclear weapons could be achieved within a few years, there was a desperate need to establish some sort of concrete political horizon through the adoption of a binding but flexible timetable for the elimination of all nuclear arsenals. His country was deeply disappointed by the growing imbalance in the NPT regime between mounting obligations in the non-proliferation pillar and slow progress in the disarmament pillar, which sapped the regime's integrity and credibility. Non-nuclear-weapon States that fulfilled their non-proliferation obligations in good faith could not be subject to increasingly intrusive, virtually all-encompassing safeguards, while States possessing nuclear weapons remained untouched. That situation was unsustainable and must be urgently reversed by means of concrete steps to implement the disarmament obligations under the NPT. Extreme caution was required when it came to increasing the safeguards burden on non-nuclear-weapon States that were fulfilling their NPT obligations. Although cases of non-compliance called for exceptional approaches, those could not be subsequently applied across the board as the Agency's standard verification practice. While the Secretariat must have the tools it needed to exercise its statutory functions and supervise the fulfilment of States' voluntary safeguards obligations, that task had to be conducted within certain legal and political parameters, which could not be vague and open-ended lest they be abused. The Board of Governors must therefore be duly informed of the development of key policies, in particular the State-level approach, and take the actions it deemed appropriate with a view to reaching a common understanding thereon. The authority of such policies would be strengthened as a result.

126. The role of nuclear power in general had been reassessed in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident. Occurring as it had in the midst of the nuclear renaissance, the accident had served as a reminder of the real risks involved. As the main body for international nuclear affairs, the Agency had convened the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, presided over by Brazil, in the aftermath of the accident.

127. Member States must take an integrated approach to nuclear safety that reconciled domestic and international efforts. Brazil had subscribed to all the conventions on nuclear safety. Following the Fukushima accident, the national authorities had conducted stress tests at the country's nuclear power plants in order to identify new, possibly exceptional, risk factors. The regulatory body had also tasked the plant operators with producing updated studies aimed, inter alia, at enhancing protection against external and internal hazards and improving emergency preparedness policies. Joint assessments had also been conducted with other members of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies. Brazil looked forward to participating actively in the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety to be held in December 2012.

128. While acknowledging the central role played by the Agency in nuclear security matters, he underlined that legitimate concerns about possible malicious acts against nuclear facilities or involving nuclear material must not be allowed to hinder the use and development of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. Brazil had agreed with the Agency to establish a nuclear security support centre in Rio de Janeiro, which would initially focus on national capabilities and could later serve as a regional centre for cooperation or assistance. It was also intended to become part of the international network of support centres.

129. Brazil looked forward to the International Conference on Nuclear Security, to be held in Vienna in July 2013, which would provide an opportunity to evaluate the global efforts made thus far.

130. Nuclear security was closely intertwined with nuclear disarmament. Over the preceding decade, the gap between the agendas of the Agency and such bodies as the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly and the NPT Review Conference had narrowed. It was important to continue that trend, as nuclear security concerns could only be tackled thoroughly in a world free of nuclear weapons.

131. Mr OSAISAI (Nigeria) thanked the Director General for his untiring efforts to resolve the thorny issues of nuclear terrorism and the security of nuclear material, and for creating a platform for global dialogue on those issues over the preceding year. His country commended the Agency for providing training and specialized equipment to certain Member States to combat trafficking in nuclear material, for establishing the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee to take the lead in developing best practices in nuclear security, and for implementing the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety following the Fukushima accident. Nigeria welcomed the fact that more than 100 countries now reported incidents of theft or other illicit activities involving nuclear and other radioactive material to the Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database.

132. His country was willing to participate in the global network of nuclear security support centres. It would take all necessary measures to support the Agency's policies and programmes aimed at improving the safety and safeguards of nuclear facilities worldwide and to strengthen national, regional and international efforts for emergency preparedness and response. He acknowledged the Director General's commitment to encouraging Member States to ratify the 2005 amendment to the CPPNM. The Agency had placed its confidence in his country to host a regional workshop in Abuja in October 2012 to promote the ratification of that amendment in the African region.

133. Nigeria commended the Director General for reaffirming the Agency's commitment to work for a world free of all nuclear weapons at the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony marking the 65th anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. Member States needed to recognize the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; Nigeria appreciated the enormity of the challenges involved in achieving such an objective, but hoped that with the commitment of Member States, they could be surmounted in the subsequent years.

134. The Agency encouraged international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. Member States needed to show stronger commitment to the Agency's programmes aimed at enhancing sustainable development as a basis for attaining world peace and harmony through the promotion of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

135. Given the important role played by the Board of Governors, it was essential that area groups reach consensus upon which Member States to designate thereto. Nigeria was one of the countries nominated by consensus by the African Group; if elected by the General Conference, it would use its membership to further strengthen the implementation of the Agency's core mandate.

136. The topic of the 2012 Scientific Forum was of particular interest to his country. Its focus was the harnessing of nuclear technology to meet food security targets and achieve the MDGs in the face of climate change and population growth in many developing economies. As Nigeria was greatly affected by climate change and had an annual growth rate which exceeded 3%, the outcomes of the Scientific Forum would be useful to national efforts aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and national food security.

137. In order to respond to various development challenges, the Nigerian Government was developing programmes to build national capacities in the application of nuclear techniques for agricultural production and soil mapping, as well as radiation processing techniques for food preservation to control and minimize post-harvest losses and address animal health challenges. Relevant national stakeholder institutions in the food and agriculture sector were using irradiation processing to reduce food spoilage. The strength of the cobalt-60 source in the gamma irradiation facility at the Nuclear Technology Centre in Abuja was being upgraded to 1 megacurie and the construction of a product warehouse was nearing completion. With the Agency's continued support, the gamma irradiation facility could be designated as a regional centre for irradiation processing with enhanced facilities and capacity for total quality management.

138. Through technical cooperation projects, Nigeria was also taking steps to improve the safety and quality of foods for domestic consumption and export. The Agency had provided support for the establishment and upgrade of laboratories analysing pesticide residues and mycotoxins, and for capacity-building in the detection of a wide range of toxic pollutants for adequate food quality management.

139. In the field of water resources management, the Agency had assisted national efforts to set up an isotope hydrology laboratory at the Centre for Energy Research and Training in Zaria. The facility was now fully operational and would be useful in the Agency's ongoing efforts to assist sub-Saharan African countries in the mapping and eventual exploitation of shared aquifers. Of particular note was technical cooperation project RAF/7/010 entitled "Supporting Integrated Water Resource Management for the Iullemeden and Taoudéni/Tanezrouft Aquifer Systems and the Niger River".

140. With regard to human health, Nigeria had been receiving assistance from the Agency since 1996 in the early detection and management of cancer. It had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Agency in 2008 for assistance in building national capacities and upgrading nuclear medicine and radiotherapy facilities in ten tertiary hospitals over a period of six years. About a dozen nuclear medicine physicians were undergoing specialized training through the Agency's fellowship programme, and over two dozen radiotherapy professionals had already undergone specialized training. He commended the Agency's efforts to help Nigeria develop its national capacities to train such specialists as an important component of the country's integrated national cancer control plan scheduled for completion in 2017. In light of the synergy that had evolved over the years, Nigeria expected its human health programmes to continue to benefit from PACT.

141. The implementation of Nigeria's nuclear power programme, which was aimed at diversifying the country's power generation base to ensure long-term energy self-sufficiency and security, was well on course. It was a serious national undertaking that entailed a huge long-term investment of human and material resources. Since its sustainability and success would depend to a large extent on the availability of a strong and competent manpower, considerable effort had gone into developing an educational infrastructure. A strong partnership had taken root between the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission and participating national universities, with invaluable assistance from the Agency, for the joint development and implementation of degree and professional training programmes in nuclear science and technology and nuclear security.

142. Appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks were also critical to the success of the nuclear power programme. Draft national nuclear legislation to amend Nigeria's existing Atomic Energy Act had now been finalized, and the national nuclear regulatory law was being amended to make it robust enough to regulate adequately the emerging national nuclear power industry.

143. Nigeria had done some preliminary site selection and characterization work for its first set of nuclear power plants. The two preferred sites of Geregu in Kogi State and Itu in Akwa Ibom State would undergo further detailed evaluation and assessment studies.

144. An effective strategy and mechanism for the safe management of nuclear waste needed to be developed in order to promote public acceptance of a nuclear power programme. In that regard, his country had established a nuclear waste management policy and had begun to develop facilities for the comprehensive management of low and intermediate level radioactive waste, with assistance from the Agency.

145. The decision to embark on a nuclear power programme was the inalienable right of any sovereign nation, but such a programme must be implemented with the support of development partners and needed to have the confidence of the international community. Nigeria's programme was entirely for peaceful purposes and enjoyed the support of the Agency and other partners. The United States of America had provided helpful assistance in developing the necessary infrastructure through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. Nigeria had signed two cooperation agreements with the Russian Federation: one on the peaceful use of atomic energy and the other on the implementation of Nigeria's nuclear power programme.

146. In furtherance of the country's obligation to ensure nuclear safety, safeguards and security, the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority had developed a wide range of regulations and guidelines to strengthen the national regulatory framework. He thanked the Agency for its ongoing efforts to evaluate the efficacy of Nigeria's regulatory infrastructure through appropriate expert missions, peer reviews and training workshops. His country had acceded to and ratified all the relevant treaties and conventions prior to commencing operation of nuclear power plants.

147. Given its use of various radiation detection measurement instruments in many nuclear applications, Nigeria had come to require a facility for instrument calibration, personnel dose measurements, and the calibration of therapy-level equipment. It therefore appreciated the Agency's assistance in equipping the secondary standard dosimetry laboratory at the National Institute of Radiation Protection and Research in Ibadan.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.