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President: Mr MABHONGO (South Africa)

Later: Mr LABBE-VILLA (Chile)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AAEA	Arab Atomic Energy Agency
ABACC	Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARASIA	Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
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
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMCT	fissile material cut-off treaty
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
HEU	high-enriched uranium
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSServ	International Nuclear Security Advisory Service
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NLO	National Liaison Officer
NPCs	national participation costs
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the 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
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
Nuclear Safety Convention	Convention on Nuclear Safety
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
NWS	nuclear-weapon State
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (earlier CSCE)
P5+1	The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SEANWFZ Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone
SSAC	State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2012 (continued) (GC(57)/3 and Supplement)

1. Mr HIMEDE (Mozambique) said that his country was benefiting from Agency technical assistance, including in human and animal health, agriculture, energy planning and mining in terms of training, the establishment of laboratories and the improvement of activities using nuclear technology. Mozambique was committed to the safety requirements recommended by the Agency. The National Atomic Energy Agency was developing a regulatory infrastructure, and a draft nuclear law had recently been submitted to parliament with a view to its approval and enactment by 2014. Mozambique also expected to sign its CPF for 2013–2016 before the end of 2013.

2. The increasing use of nuclear technology required a continued endeavour to attain high standards of nuclear safety and security. Taken together, the Three Mile Island accident, the Chernobyl disaster and the Fukushima tragedy had been a wake-up call to make the necessary extra effort to enhance the international nuclear safety regime. However, despite the advances that had been made in that regard, much remained to be done.

3. Turning to recent international events, he said that deliberations at the June 2013 International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century had been of relevance to the strengthening of the role of the Agency in time of emergency, and would also have a positive impact in allaying post-Fukushima fears and opposition to the use of nuclear technology to generate electricity. The International Conference on Nuclear Security, held in July 2013, had achieved its intended objective of rallying the international community against the clear and present danger of radioactive material falling into the wrong hands. Important issues as to how to strengthen prevention, detection and response in order to stop the illegal trade in nuclear and other radioactive material had been outlined, including the need to accelerate ratification of the Amendment to the CPPNM for its entry into force as soon as possible.

4. Mozambique, as a State party to the NPT, was fully committed to the enforcement and universalization of the Treaty, and believed that arms control and nuclear disarmament were key to ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. As a matter of priority, a way must be found to revitalize the stalled negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

5. Noting that his country had recently signed the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, he said that Mozambique highly valued its cooperation with the Agency, particularly through PACT. His country also welcomed the Revised Arrangements signed by the Agency and FAO that strengthened the role of the Joint Division.

6. Mozambique, which had accepted the 2010 Fourth Extension of AFRA, commended the Agency on its support for Africa in the use of nuclear techniques to estimate soil erosion, assess the effectiveness of soil conservation measures, and pest control.

7. Welcoming the continued positive evolution of his country's cooperation with the Agency, he noted with satisfaction that, despite resource constraints, the technical cooperation programme remained one of the Agency's priorities. It was only right that, in order to maximize the programme's impact, the Agency was working to improve partnerships with other key international organizations, especially FAO, UNIDO and WHO.

8. Mr KOSTOV (Bulgaria) said that his country was committed to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to the strengthening of global security and stability. Bulgaria called for the universalization of the NPT and of additional protocols, and believed that Agency safeguards activities played an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT.

9. Bulgaria reaffirmed its full support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and commended efforts towards convening a conference on the matter. It believed that inclusion of the item concerning Israeli nuclear capabilities in the agenda of the General Conference did not contribute to reaching the desired consensus on the establishment of such a zone.

10. Bulgaria supported the Agency's efforts to continue its verification activities in Iran and to resolve all outstanding issues regarding that country's nuclear programme, including concerns about possible military dimensions. It urged Iran to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Board and to cooperate fully with the Agency.

11. His country remained seriously concerned about the nuclear weapons and missile programmes of the DPRK and the decision of that country to cease cooperation with the Agency. His country called upon the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities.

12. Bulgaria urged Syria to cooperate urgently and transparently with the Agency to clarify matters with regard to the Dair Alzour site and the other sites, and to bring into force an additional protocol as soon as possible.

13. Bulgaria had noted from the Annual Report for 2012 that the safety performance indicator data on all the nuclear power plants in the world showed that the operational safety level remained high. The Agency had an important role to play in supporting Member States in that regard.

14. Capacity building and research activities in the nuclear field were of great importance for Bulgaria, which participated effectively in the activities of a number of international scientific organizations. His country was also committed to peer reviews and had, pursuant to the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and European Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom, hosted an OSART mission at the Kozloduy nuclear power plant in November 2012 and an IRRS mission in April 2013, the reports of which had been made public.

15. Bulgaria supported the view expressed at the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety regarding the benefit of sharing the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. His country had already taken prompt actions to ensure the continued safety of its nuclear facilities and would implement the necessary measures as appropriate. It also appreciated the activities of the Working Group on Effectiveness and Transparency, which would be reported to the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in 2014.

16. Bulgaria reaffirmed its strong commitment to protecting sensitive nuclear materials and facilities and welcomed the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts held by the Agency in July. Bulgaria was ready to apply self-assessment of nuclear security culture at the Kozloduy nuclear power plant — the first time such an assessment had been performed on a Bulgarian plant in operation.

17. Noting the importance of the Agency's technical cooperation activities, he said that Bulgaria actively participated in national and regional projects. A large number of Bulgarian specialists and scientists had attended the seminars, training courses, technical meetings, conferences and scientific forums organized by the Agency in 2012. Furthermore, during 2013 Bulgaria had hosted a regional workshop on Level 2 Probabilistic Safety Assessment, with 42 participating experts.

18. Given that adequate funding was vital for the effective implementation of the Agency's technical cooperation programmes, Bulgaria paid its annual contribution to the TCF in full and on time.

19. Mr STEPANENKO (Belarus) said that the authority of the Agency, as the leading intergovernmental organization promoting the use of nuclear energy in the interests of peace, health and prosperity, was beyond doubt. The visibility of each of the Agency's main areas of activity at any given time depended directly on the current global agenda.

20. Belarus attached particular importance to the Agency's role in the development of safe nuclear power generation. Nuclear power was an economically justified and environmentally friendly option for many countries, including his own, which had decided in 2008 to construct its first nuclear power plant. Operation of the plant would save 5 billion cubic metres of imported natural gas, reduce the cost of electricity generation, replace part of the country's ageing and inefficient generating capacity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7–10 million tonnes per year.

21. The preparatory construction work for the power plant was almost complete and the main construction work would begin after an assessment by Government experts of the project documentation and the granting of a construction licence by the regulatory authority. The construction process was taking place in close collaboration with the supplier State, the Russian Federation, which had provided prompt and active support in terms of construction and infrastructure, and also cooperation in the nuclear safety area under an agreement signed in February 2013. A further agreement on operational notification of a nuclear accident and exchanges of information on nuclear and radiation safety was almost ready for signature.

22. The safety and reliability of the new plant were of high priority to Belarus, which had suffered greatly from the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident and remained committed to observance of Agency norms and standards, as well as other international nuclear obligations. While nuclear safety was the responsibility of the individual State, effective international cooperation was also required. Belarus 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.

23. He stressed the significance of the universal application and ongoing improvement of international legal instruments in the area of nuclear safety, including the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. His country supported the Working Group on Effectiveness and Transparency, which would consider amendments to the Convention on Nuclear Safety based on lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident.

24. His country's nuclear power programme was being implemented in strict accordance with Agency standards and recommendations and with advisory and expert assistance, including various expert missions. His Government had adopted a plan of action for implementing the recommendations of the INIR mission conducted in June 2012. An integrated plan was also being drawn up for the further development of the nuclear power infrastructure with the assistance of the Agency, the Russian Federation and other partners.

25. Belarus commended the Agency on the effective implementation of the technical cooperation programme, and would continue to pay its contributions to the TCF in full and on time.

26. Belarus accorded high priority to the practical aspects of nuclear security and the physical protection of nuclear materials. Welcoming the discussions at the International Conference on Nuclear Security, held at the Agency's headquarters in July with the participation of all interested States, he

said that his country's cooperation with the Agency in strengthening nuclear security in recent years had been fruitful. The integrated action plan being developed with Agency assistance would have a positive effect throughout the region.

27. The Agency's international advisory services on nuclear security and physical protection were an important tool for cooperation with Member States. An INSServ mission was due to visit Belarus in the autumn and its conclusions would undoubtedly provide valuable guidance for the country's nuclear power programme.

28. The year 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of the accession of Belarus to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Belarus considered the fulfilment of its obligations under the NPT and its support for international efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to be key elements of its foreign and security policies. Outlining some of the steps his country had taken in that regard, he said that Belarus had voluntarily and unconditionally removed all nuclear weapons from its territory, concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency and put in place a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material. As its nuclear energy programme developed, his country would continue to improve its accounting system and further its constructive cooperation with the Agency's Department of Safeguards.

29. Mr TSEKOA (Lesotho) said that current developments in the international arena showed more than ever the need to accelerate efforts to bring about a world that was free from weapons of mass destruction. To help achieve that goal, the Agency must continue to advocate total disarmament for nuclear-weapon States, strive to make the application of the NPT universal, preserve its integrity and moral authority by resisting politicization and avoid discrimination in its work to increase the transparency of nuclear programmes in all countries.

30. Lesotho remained committed to the Pelindaba Treaty and believed that the creation of NWFZs in other parts of the world could greatly contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons. It was to be hoped that all the countries of the Middle East would eventually agree to the creation of an NWFZ in that region.

31. The wide participation of Member States in the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts and the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration communicated a strong message that nuclear security was recognized as a priority by governments. As a demonstration of its commitment to strengthening nuclear security nationally, regionally and globally, Lesotho had joined the Incident and Trafficking Database.

32. Lesotho applauded the progress being made by the Agency towards the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. It was satisfied with the measures being taken to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, and welcomed the Agency's continued support to Member States for the sharing of knowledge and information on all aspects of nuclear safety.

33. During the current session of the General Conference, Lesotho had deposited its instruments of accession 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. His country was also in the process of establishing a national regulatory authority and had, with the Agency's assistance, finalized a nuclear protection bill that would shortly be brought before Parliament for enactment.

34. Lesotho expressed appreciation to the Agency for the planned technical meeting on implementing the legislative and regulatory framework for nuclear security, to be held in November 2013 in Vienna. It looked forward to participating in that important capacity and competence building exercise.

35. Since it had joined the Agency in 2009, Lesotho had benefited immensely from the Agency's programmes in areas including human resources development and capacity building in the fields of human health, assessment of groundwater resources, and agriculture and food security. His Government expressed gratitude for the support rendered to facilitate the establishment of a radiation medicine facility for diagnostic, therapeutic and palliative cancer management and building human resource capacity for its operation. Combating cancer was an increasingly pressing health challenge in Lesotho. The support received from the Agency through consultations, technical expert missions and capacity building and training had been invaluable.

36. As the Agency's membership increased, so did the need to increase resources for its programmes and activities. Lesotho would make its modest contribution, not only to the Regular Budget but also to the TCF. It was grateful to Member States that had provided additional support to the technical cooperation programme and called upon them to continue to do so in order to enhance the effectiveness and sustainable implementation of technical cooperation activities.

37. At the regional level, Lesotho was actively involved in a wide range of projects within the framework of AFRA aimed at achieving regional self-sufficiency in the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, and would be hosting AFRA's 25th technical working group meeting in April 2014.

38. Mr LE DINH Tien (Viet Nam) congratulated Mr Amano on his reappointment as Director General of the Agency and assured him of his Government's full support.

39. His country, which was implementing its strategy for peaceful utilization of atomic energy up to 2020, highly appreciated the commendable efforts of the Agency over the previous year in fulfilling its mandate. It particularly welcomed the holding of the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century in June 2013, and the International Conference on Nuclear Security in July.

40. He noted with satisfaction that, under its CPF for the period 2011–2015, Viet Nam was continuing to receive valuable technical assistance from the Agency in areas including human resources development, strengthening the technical capacity of the nuclear regulatory body and promoting nuclear applications in health care, agriculture, industry and the environment. During the 2012–2013 fiscal year, Viet Nam had participated in forty-three regional and interregional technical cooperation projects and implemented five national projects. It had proposed seven new technical cooperation projects for the period 2014–2015. His country was grateful to Agency's PACT programme and the OPEC Fund for International Development, which had provided more than US \$400 000 for a project on breast and cervical cancer screening in Viet Nam. It was to be hoped that the achievements of the project would be extended throughout Viet Nam in the near future.

41. Viet Nam was continuing its nuclear power programme and highly appreciated the Agency's effective assistance in building the national nuclear power infrastructure, in particular the INIR mission in 2012 and implementation of the Integrated Work Plan. By the end of 2013, the site investigation and feasibility study for two nuclear power plants with a capacity of 4000 MW would be completed and submitted to the Government for approval. In developing its nuclear power programme, the Government of Viet Nam attached particular attention to the development of regulatory documents, human resources, public communication, and the establishment of an independent and competent nuclear regulatory body.

42. Viet Nam welcomed the important developments that had taken place during the year concerning the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). The first formal meeting of that Network held earlier in September in Thailand had discussed an action plan of activities and finalized the terms of reference, which had been formally endorsed by the meeting of ASEAN senior officials the previous week. Viet Nam

looked forward to enhanced cooperation within ASEAN in advance of the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015.

43. Having expressed support for the Agency's proposed Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017, he said that Viet Nam had continued to cooperate with the Agency, the United States and the Russian Federation concerning the fuel conversion of the Dalat research reactor. The substitution of all HEU fuel rods to LEU fuel rods had been completed in November 2011 and the last 106 fuel rods had been transported back to the Russian Federation the previous July.

44. Noting that the Government of Viet Nam had issued its plan to join relevant international conventions and treaties for its nuclear power programme development, he was pleased to announce that Viet Nam had decided to participate in the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; the official accession document would be finalized in the coming days.

45. Viet Nam had fulfilled its obligations and commitments to the Agency, including the provision of necessary resources for technical cooperation projects, payment of its NPCs, and its contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF for 2013. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Agency, his country had successfully hosted a number of IAEA/RCA workshops and training courses.

46. In conclusion, his delegation trusted that the Agency would continue its efforts and effective cooperation to help developing Member States achieve their objective of using nuclear energy in a safe, secure manner for peaceful purposes for their socio-economic development.

47. Mr MUHAMMED-ALFA (Ghana), noting that his country had particularly welcomed the Director General's increased focus on the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the health, energy and water sectors, said that 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission. Over the previous 50 years, nuclear science and related technologies had been applied increasingly to various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. His Government appreciated the technical and financial assistance offered to the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission by the Agency and development partners, and hoped that the partnership between the Agency and Ghana would be sustained and strengthened.

48. Ghana had recently communicated to the Agency its decision to add nuclear energy to its energy mix. In that connection, the Government of Ghana had been engaged in bilateral talks with some development partners to develop its nuclear infrastructure further.

49. Ghana was privileged to be involved in the regional project on the integrated and sustainable management of shared aquifer systems and basins of the Sahel Region, which sought to identify existing data and knowledge gaps and further build the human capacity and infrastructure for the application of isotopic techniques with respect to shared groundwater resources. It would also provide the scientific basis for the preparation of a strategic action programme to establish a legal, policy and institutional framework for the multipartite management and rational use of shared aquifers.

50. Ghana had been actively involved in the Agency's nuclear knowledge management programme. In September 2012, his country had signed a memorandum of agreement with the Agency to serve as a regional hub for the AFRA-Network for Education in Science and Technology (AFRA-NEST). The partnership sought to promote capacity building through knowledge transfer among Agency Member States as well as to develop and provide materials relevant to nuclear education, training and outreach in Member States and, during the initial phase, an e-learning platform had been installed to enhance capacity for human resources development and nuclear knowledge management. Ghana would continue to collaborate with the Agency in human resource capacity development and in training nuclear scientists from Africa and beyond.

51. Ghana was implementing the borehole disposal concept as an end-point management option for disused sealed radioactive sources generated in the country. With the support of stakeholder institutions, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission had carried out geophysical investigations and preliminary characterization on the proposed site; it had also developed technical specification documentation for further site investigations as well as a draft radioactive waste management policy and strategy framework. With the assistance of the Agency, Ghana had developed human resource capabilities for radioactive waste management, and successful implementation of the borehole disposal concept would help the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission to position itself as the pioneer in the application of the technology, with Ghana becoming the first country in Africa to implement the concept.

52. Ghana acknowledged the concern of the international community regarding the responsibility of State parties to ensure that nuclear and radioactive materials under their control were protected against theft and sabotage. Ghana had participated actively in the Agency's Nuclear Security Guidance Committee for the development of nuclear security documents and had also been engaged in the activities of the Agency's international network of nuclear security support centres of excellence, which aimed to help build national capacity for nuclear security in Member States.

53. Noting that Ghana had provided experts and facilities for nuclear security training programmes organized by the Agency, he said that his country remained committed to working with the international community in fighting nuclear terrorism.

54. Mr OSAISAI (Nigeria) congratulated the Director General on his well-deserved reappointment and commended his untiring efforts, including in facilitating access to stable sources of energy and developing an effective framework for nuclear security. Nigeria also praised the Agency's work concerning nuclear terrorism and the security of nuclear materials and drew attention to the establishment of the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee, which had taken the lead in developing best practices in nuclear security and created a platform for global dialogue. The success already recorded in some countries in the prevention of nuclear terrorism could serve to inspire Member States that the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials could be stemmed through the development of national capacity, the deployment of skilled personnel and the appropriate forensic tools.

55. His country was willing to participate in the global network of nuclear security support centres and recognized the need for collective global action to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities and materials, including the sharing of best practices. Nigeria would continue to promote ratification of the 2005 amendment to the CPPNM in the African region and noted that, since the regional workshop held in Abuja in October 2012, one additional ratification and one acceptance by African Member States had been received.

56. Nigeria regretted the lack of progress in discussions at the Conference on Disarmament and would welcome the immediate commencement of discussions on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

57. The topic of the 2013 Scientific Forum was of particular interest to his country. It was vital to protect and preserve the ecological balance for the survival of coastal regions and the marine environment, particularly with land-based human activities estimated to contribute as much as 70% of the marine pollution in many coastal areas. Nigeria was committed to programmes that improved understanding of the main factors contributing to the deterioration of the marine environment and to the development of appropriate policies.

58. The Agency's technical cooperation programme must continue to be given the requisite importance alongside the Agency's other responsibilities, including through the provision of adequate and predictable resources for its implementation. Nigeria had recently signed its updated CPF with the

Agency for the period 2012–2017, which focused on energy planning and infrastructure development, human health, food and agriculture, nuclear safety and radiation protection, water resources, and education and training in support of a nuclear power programme.

59. Nigeria welcomed the assistance provided by the Agency to promote the effective utilization of isotope and nuclear techniques for water resources management, including through the implementation of two national projects. The isotope hydrology laboratory at the Centre for Energy Research and Training in Zaria, which had been equipped with Agency support, 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. His country was one of thirteen participating in the regional project on integrated and sustainable management of shared aquifer systems and basins of the Sahel region and would be hosting a meeting in October in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) concerning the sustainable implementation of that project.

60. In the area of human health, Nigeria had been receiving assistance from the Agency since 1996 in the early detection, control and management of cancer. Technical cooperation projects had enabled Nigeria to strengthen its national infrastructure and facilities for delivery of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services and provided opportunities for building national capacities. About twenty nuclear medicine physicians were undergoing specialized training through the Agency's fellowship programme, and many others were being trained in tertiary hospitals. He commended the Agency's efforts to help Nigeria develop its national capacities to train such specialists and hoped that more support would be provided to enable Nigeria to expand its clinical medical physics residency programme to meet national capacity building needs.

61. Nigeria welcomed the Agency's decision to relocate the PACT Programme Office to the Department of Technical Cooperation. The planned upgrade of that Office to a division would undoubtedly strengthen delivery of the Programme to meet more effectively the needs of Member States.

62. Nigeria was strengthening its national infrastructure for irradiation processing in the food and agriculture sector. To that end, 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 a product warehouse and other handling facilities were under construction. A memorandum of understanding was currently being developed with Agency assistance for partnership with UNIDO, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders, and it was hoped that the gamma irradiation facility could be designated as a regional centre for irradiation processing.

63. Nigeria welcomed the successful holding of the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century. It noted with satisfaction the conclusions recognizing the critical role of the Agency in a number of fields and affirming that, for many countries, nuclear power was a proven, clean, safe and economical technology that would play an increasingly important role in the future.

64. The decision to embark on a nuclear power programme was the inalienable right of any sovereign nation and Nigeria commended the Agency's assistance to support nuclear power infrastructure in developing Member States. His country was particularly grateful for the assistance it had received in building a competent and experienced human resources base for the implementation of its nuclear power programme, and he highlighted partnerships and collaboration in that regard with the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority and eleven national universities. In addition, the necessary national, legal and regulatory frameworks were being updated to ensure a robust regulatory regime and preliminary site selection had been undertaken for Nigeria's

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.

65. Nigeria looked forward to developing mutually beneficial cooperation and partnerships with regard to its nuclear power programme, which it would be implementing with the utmost transparency. His country had invited the Agency to conduct a Phase-2 INIR mission in the first half of 2014 and was developing national capacity in the area of waste management, including a nuclear waste management policy and facilities for the comprehensive management of low and intermediate level waste. It was also developing a national policy on nuclear civil liability and had commenced a comprehensive review of regulations and guidelines, including on safety, physical protection and nuclear material accounting and control. 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.

66. Nigeria would continue to work with the Agency to deploy nuclear science and technology for its national socio-economic development. Projects to be implemented in the 2014–2015 technical cooperation cycle concerned research reactor planning, emergency preparedness, expanding national capacity for radiation processing applications and development of infrastructure for radiotherapy.

67. His country was concerned about the slow progress being made with respect to nuclear disarmament. It called for renewed efforts for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and encouraged the early convening of the proposed conference to discuss the modalities for such a zone.

68. In closing, he urged all Member States to show stronger commitment to the Agency's programmes aimed at achieving sustainable development through the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and expressed his country's deep appreciation of the assistance it continued to receive from the Agency.

69. Mr BALSLEV (Denmark) said that the Agency's central role in the global effort to prevent nuclear proliferation remained at the centre of his country's attention. The Agency's recognized mandate in the field of nuclear safety and security was also of increasingly pivotal importance.

70. The Agency's verification work offered its Member States the opportunity to clear themselves of any suspicion of wrongdoing through full and unrestricted cooperation with the organization. As experience had shown, the Agency could only play that role effectively when it had the necessary tools, and his country was convinced that a comprehensive safeguards agreement in combination with an additional protocol constituted the contemporary standard for verification under the NPT. It therefore called for universal accession to and implementation of both instruments and was pleased to have concluded an additional protocol for Greenland in 2013. Denmark also fully supported the Agency's efforts to develop further the State-level safeguards concept in order to optimize safeguards implementation.

71. Denmark considered the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, along with Agency safeguards and the NPT, to be a helpful step towards the implementation of the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. Following the successful of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, it was important that implementation of the action plan adopted there be prioritized and steps that might jeopardize that work be avoided. It was regrettable that it had not been possible to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in 2012, and Denmark called on all States in the region to help create the conditions necessary for convening the conference as soon as possible.

72. The United Nations Security Council also had a key responsibility for non-proliferation, and his country fully supported its resolutions 1887 (2009) and 1540 (2004). The Council had also adopted a number of country-specific resolutions with the aim of upholding the integrity and efficiency of the non-proliferation regime. It was essential that all countries fully implement the resolutions on the DPRK and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

73. With regard to Iran, the Director General's November 2011 report had set out what the Agency termed overall credible information indicating that Iran had carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device. That was a matter of grave concern. Iran's ongoing and expanding enrichment activities, including enrichment to 20%, had exacerbated that concern. Denmark urged Iran to comply fully with all resolutions of the Security Council, the Board of Governors and with its safeguards agreement so that confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities could be restored. His country looked forward to the forthcoming meeting between the Agency and Iran and strongly hoped that it would mark the beginning of intensified Iranian cooperation with the Agency.

74. As regards the Syrian Arab Republic, Denmark had noted with serious concern the Agency's recently confirmed conclusion that the destroyed building at Dair Alzour had very likely been a nuclear reactor and should have been declared by Syria. It joined the Director General in urging Syria to implement fully its safeguards agreement and bring into force an additional protocol. That issue was of central importance for the credibility of the international non-proliferation verification regime.

75. With regard to the DPRK, Denmark was very concerned that the Agency was not being permitted to fulfil its mandate and it strongly supported calls on the DPRK to comply with all its international obligations and commitments and to allow an early return of Agency inspectors.

76. Turning to the issue of nuclear security, he said that the successful International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century held in June had reflected the Agency's central role in helping States to protect themselves and each other against nuclear terrorism and other malicious acts involving nuclear material from weapons or peaceful uses. As the Danish Foreign Minister had said at the Conference, no agency played a more fundamental role than the International Atomic Energy Agency in ensuring increased global security in the nuclear field.

77. Denmark welcomed the Board's approval of the Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017, which would further strengthen the impact of the Agency in that field. His country was pleased to have been able to contribute financially to the implementation of the Plan and remained committed to ensuring that the NSF had sufficient funds, including from the Regular Budget, to operate effectively. The Nuclear Security Summit to be held in the Hague in 2014 would provide another opportunity to harness the international community's resources and give further momentum to comprehensive efforts to enhance nuclear security worldwide.

78. Turning to nuclear safety, he said that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant continued to demonstrate the need to substantially strengthen nuclear safety around the world. Denmark welcomed the effort made by the Secretariat and many Member States to implement the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety since its adoption in 2011, including the provision of financial and human resources to that end. However, it continued to see a need to strengthen further some aspects of nuclear safety efforts, in particular peer review mechanisms, Agency safety inspections and binding safety standards. While many of the action points in the Plan primarily affected countries with nuclear power programmes, Denmark had also taken steps to implement relevant parts of it. It was currently reorganizing its preparedness regime in order to achieve a higher level of awareness and coordination among the various national authorities involved in emergency planning. Denmark had also continued to strengthen its nuclear system to permanently monitor radiation levels in Denmark

and Greenland. Furthermore, the Danish Government had decided to strengthen cooperation with its Nordic neighbours within the nuclear field.

79. Turning to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, he said that Denmark had made the decision that nuclear power should not be included in its own energy mix, as its national long-term energy production plans was based on the development and expansion of more sustainable forms of energy. However, it respected the choice of other Member States and the Agency's statutory obligations. It also recognized the interest of a number of States in introducing nuclear power and highly valued the Agency's contributions to ensuring that that was done under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions. Denmark also appreciated the substantive advice and support that it had received from the Secretariat regarding potential uranium mining in Greenland.

80. Denmark was appreciative of the Agency's highly professional work in the field of technical cooperation on peaceful applications and had again pledged its full contribution to the TCF in order to support the Agency's work to combat hunger, disease and poverty.

81. As a coastal country, Denmark welcomed the choice of theme of the 2013 Scientific Forum and noted that the world would continue to rely on the Agency for expertise and support in all its fields of activity.

82. Mr PETERSEN (Norway) said that disarmament and non-proliferation remained cornerstones of the foreign policy of his country, which recognized the importance of a strong and universal NPT and effective Agency safeguards in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

83. His Government was deeply concerned about Iran's continued non-compliance with its obligations under relevant Board and Security Council resolutions. Iran's failure to implement its NPT obligations was challenging the international non-proliferation regime and must not be allowed to continue.

84. Norway continued to support fully the political and diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the Iranian nuclear issue and called on Iran to engage fully with the Agency in order to clarify all outstanding issues and restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. It looked forward to constructive engagement in dialogue with the Agency by the new Iranian Government and to real progress after the meeting between the Agency and Iran later in September.

85. Norway remained deeply concerned about the ongoing defiance of the DPRK regarding its nuclear weapons programme, most recently the nuclear test in February 2013. The DPRK's declaration that it was now a nuclear-weapon State was unacceptable, and its recent statements about expanding and modernizing its nuclear capabilities were deeply worrying. The DPRK should refrain from any further provocations and return to the six-party talks immediately and without preconditions. It should abandon and completely dismantle any nuclear weapons related programmes in a prompt, verifiable and irreversible manner.

86. Norway regretted the fact that no progress had been made in relation to the nuclear programme of Syria since the preceding session of the General Conference, and it urged Syria to engage immediately in order to resolve the outstanding issues.

87. Although nuclear safety was a national responsibility, the Fukushima Daiichi accident had served as a reminder that nuclear accidents were never a just national concern and had highlighted the urgent need to improve nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response.

88. Over the previous four years, Norway had allocated €2.5 million to support the Agency's work in strengthening safety capacity in developing countries embarking on or with existing nuclear power

programmes. It had contributed to the expansion of the Global Safety Assessment Network and the Safety Assessment Education and Training programme and also the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, and welcomed the progress made in that regard. Norway had recently pledged another €2 million over the next three years to that important work and looked forward to the continued implementation of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies.

89. Turning to transport safety, he said that Norway welcomed the 2012 edition of the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material and was encouraged by the good dialogue between shipping and coastal States.

90. While the commitment to nuclear security had been confirmed at the highest political level, slow progress was being made in adherence to the important 2005 amendment to the CPPNM. Norway called upon all States to sign and ratify the global conventions on nuclear security and to cooperate with the Agency in their implementation.

91. Norway had welcomed the International Conference on Nuclear Security organized by the Agency in July 2013 and had taken part in the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit. It also supported the promotion of nuclear security through international forums such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and was contributing financially to the efforts being made to ensure full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

92. His Government had consistently worked towards minimizing the use of HEU, and had co-hosted the 2nd International Symposium on the Minimization on Highly Enriched Uranium, at which participants had taken stock of the developments since the holding of the first international symposium on that issue in Oslo in 2006. The results had been impressive, but much remained to be done, and there was a need to address the issue in a more transparent manner than in the past.

93. Norway, which was a strong supporter of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, appreciated the Secretariat's work concerning the establishment of an IAEA LEU bank, and the dialogue between the Agency and the Government of Kazakhstan on a Host State agreement. Norway looked forward to the finalization of the agreement and establishment of the bank.

94. The peaceful utilization of nuclear energy went far beyond the generation of electricity. Norway supported the Agency's technical cooperation programme, paid its full share of the TCF target and hosted scientific visits. Through the provision of assistance in areas such as safe water, crop improvement and nuclear medicine, the Agency could, in close partnership with other United Nations organizations, make a positive contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

95. His country's position with regard to nuclear energy was well known: while Norway fully supported Article IV of the NPT and respected every nation's sovereign right to choose its own energy mix, provided that highest standards of safety and security were met, it had chosen not to include nuclear power in its own energy mix.

96. The Agency must have the authority, expertise and resources necessary in order to meet the resulting safety, emergency preparedness, security and non-proliferation challenges from the likely increase in the use of nuclear energy worldwide. Norway had consistently argued that the Agency's Regular Budget should increase in proportion to the tasks assigned to the Agency. Norway had provided approximately \$5.9 million to the Agency's extrabudgetary programme for strengthening nuclear safety in developing countries for the period 2010–2015 as well as 28 million Norwegian krone to the NSF over the period 2010–2013 and for nuclear security projects in developing countries.

97. Norway fully supported the Agency's verification activities and welcomed the State-level concept as an efficient and effective tool in safeguards implementation. Strong and independent safeguards analytical capabilities were essential to the Agency's work and integrity, and his country had pledged 5 million Norwegian krone in support of the ECAS project.

98. It was important for the Agency also to prepare for future tasks, such as potential verification tasks under nuclear disarmament or arms control agreements, as set out in the Medium Term Strategy 2012–2017, which Norway supported.

99. Work in the areas of nuclear safety and nuclear security could not be dealt with in isolation and must encompass non-proliferation and disarmament. The Agency remained of critical importance to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, and Norway urged all States to join the NPT and conclude safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

100. Mr BENHOCINE (Algeria) welcomed the progress achieved by the Agency in implementing the technical cooperation programme, an indispensable vehicle for the transfer of nuclear knowledge and technology in support of socio-economic development. His country was satisfied with its cooperation with the Agency, which was underpinned by its CPF for 2012–2017, and also participated in the AFRA regional programme.

101. Algeria, which had reaffirmed its commitment to introduce nuclear power at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century in June that year, had proposed a new project to support the introduction of nuclear power in Algeria for the 2014–2015 cycle. In addition, Algerian experts were participating in the INPRO programme, notably within the framework of the project on small modular reactors. Algeria supported the Agency's efforts to improve the standardization and design of such reactors and adapt them to local conditions, in particular where water availability was concerned.

102. Noting with satisfaction that more than 40% of technical cooperation resources had been devoted to the priority issues of health, nutrition, food and agriculture in Africa over the previous year, he said that, in the area of human health, Algeria had strengthened its capacities in the fields of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy, in close cooperation with the Agency and in accordance with the country's national cancer programme. In the area of water resources, Algeria had played an important role in launching the regional project on management of water resources in the Sahel and would continue to make available its expertise and its national infrastructure in order to develop regional capacities. A regional training course within the framework of that project would be held in Algiers in December 2013.

103. Human resources were at the heart of Algeria's implementation strategy and his country had nominated the Algerian Institute for Training in Nuclear Engineering as a regional designated centre in the field of medical physics. The Algerian Commission of Atomic Energy had provided a five-month training course in radiation protection for several African countries. Algeria had also contributed through the AFRA Network for Education in Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA-NEST) and intended to participate in the Internet Reactor Laboratory project. In addition, training had been provided to interns in the field of nuclear medicine.

104. Algeria welcomed the choice of the topic for the current year's Scientific Forum. His country had experience in the field of monitoring and protection of the marine environment using nuclear techniques, which it intended to develop in close cooperation with the Agency.

105. At a time of international financial crisis, it was not easy to reconcile the rise in demand for financial resources with the domestic budgetary constraints experienced by Member States. For that reason he welcomed the consensus that had been achieved on the Programme and Budget 2014–2015,

which would enable the Agency to continue its activities while taking into account budgetary concerns. His delegation appreciated the balance between the allocation of resources to the main programmes in line with the Agency's statutory mission and the establishment of a working group that would allow the Agency to find new ways of ensuring sufficient, assured and predictable resources for the TCF. It welcomed the financial performance of the Agency in the year to 31 December 2012, which had helped it to achieve a balanced budget.

106. Algeria welcomed the progress made in the area of nuclear safety, notably in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. His country was highly appreciative of the efforts of the Agency and the international community to learn lessons from the accident at Fukushima Daiichi in order to improve nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and protection of people and the environment.

107. Growing demand for energy as well as problems associated with climate change had prompted a number of countries to launch nuclear power programmes, thus reinforcing the need for constant strengthening of nuclear safety standards. Algeria's national infrastructure had been strengthened with new laws governing safety and security. Furthermore, in addition to contributing to the work of the Agency's safety standards committees, Algerian experts had participated in numerous regional and international events concerning nuclear safety.

108. Algeria noted with satisfaction the progress made in the area of nuclear security, and welcomed the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the International Conference on Nuclear Security. International cooperation on nuclear security, under the auspices of the Agency, should be encouraged and promoted, in particular through implementation of the CPPNM and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Algeria's national nuclear security regulations had been strengthened by laws and procedures based on Agency instruments and other relevant documents. Furthermore, national bodies had strengthened their intervention capacities in the area of prevention and emergency preparedness. In cooperation with the Agency, Algeria was also preparing an INSSP.

109. With respect to safeguards, Algeria reaffirmed its support for the Agency's verification system, which should be universally applied, as an effective means of ensuring non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and noted that the verification activities conducted by the Agency in the country under the comprehensive safeguards agreement signed in 1996 had proceeded smoothly. The prominence of the theme of non-proliferation in the international arena should not remove the necessity to ensure that international agreements on nuclear disarmament were implemented, just as the introduction of a more thorough and efficient mechanism should in no way erode or restrict the inalienable right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT and Article II of the Statute.

110. He hoped that the next report of the Director General on the State-level safeguards concept would take into account the concerns expressed by Member States and their requests for clarification. Only a complete report would allow Member States to debate the issue thoroughly.

111. Algeria was convinced that issues relating to international peace and security should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. It followed with interest the dialogue with Iran within the framework of the Agency and the P5+1, which it hoped would lead to mutual agreement.

112. The Algerian delegation was deeply concerned about Israeli nuclear capabilities, which constituted a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. It noted with regret the lack of progress in the application of safeguards in the Middle East resulting from Israel's persistent refusal to join the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under the Agency's verification regime. It deplored the postponement of the conference due to be held in 2012 concerning the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, and hoped that such a conference could be convened as

soon as possible. Algeria reiterated its support for the Facilitator and thanked the Agency for its preparation of documents on modalities and experiences concerning the establishment of NWFZs in the world.

113. Mr MAUNG LWIN (Myanmar), briefly informing the General Conference about the progress that Myanmar had made in its reform process, said that for the first 30 months of its five-year term in office, the Government had been working to establish the basis for a flourishing democracy, peace, the rule of law and socio-economic development. Political stability had progressively been achieved, with the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government functioning smoothly, a new culture of dialogue taking root, and the foundations being laid for an all-inclusive political process. Furthermore, the fundamental elements were in place for the country's new competitive economy, including a managed floating currency exchange rate, lower interest rates and a liberal monetary and banking policy, as well as new legislation on foreign investment, which Myanmar welcomed.

114. International peace and security were a prerequisite for prosperity, and Myanmar continued to attach the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. Its annual resolutions on that issue to the First Committee of the General Assembly called for interim measures as part of step-by-step nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. His country's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was also shown by the fact that Myanmar was a party to the NPT and had signed the CTBT and the SEANWFZ Treaty.

115. Myanmar was preparing to comply with the obligations under its recently concluded additional protocol, including the drafting of domestic legislation and the formation of a national SSAC. It was grateful to the Agency for its assistance in the run up to the conclusion of its additional protocol, including the holding of a series of workshops in Myanmar and visits to Agency headquarters. It also thanked other international partners, including the United States Department of Energy and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, for their cooperation, which it hoped would continue in the future.

116. Myanmar was convinced that the RCA, which served as a useful platform for addressing national challenges using the experience, expertise and resources available in the Asia-Pacific region, would continue to promote regional capabilities and expertise in the fields of health, agriculture, industry and environment.

117. In conclusion, his country was confident that the Agency, whose mandate and activities it supported, would continue to play a vital role in international collaboration for the development of nuclear energy and its related technologies.

118. Mr AL HINAI (Oman) expressed appreciation of the Agency's support for the Sultanate of Oman in ensuring the sustainable management of water resources under the IAEA Water Availability Enhancement (IWAVE) project. The studies and workshops planned for 2013 and 2014 to analyse the data concerning isotopes and other hydrological information and to develop a national stable isotope laboratory with Agency support would lay the basis for a precise assessment of water resources and their sustainable exploitation to meet the Sultanate's current and future water needs.

119. Water resources were a vital necessity for the sustainable development of countries and peoples. According to the Agency's Annual Report for 2012, the funds spent on projects relating to water and the environment accounted for only 4.5% of total expenditure. That percentage failed to reflect the importance attached by States throughout the world to sustainable water resource management and environmental issues.

120. Specialists in the Sultanate of Oman had, in cooperation with Agency experts, prepared a study on the Sultanate's energy options during the period 2010–2035, considering the extent to which

various energy sources, including renewable sources, could be used to meet the Sultanate's needs. The study would shortly be published and could be taken into account in other in-depth studies of energy supply and demand and in taking decisions on the construction of nuclear power plants.

121. Applications of nuclear technology in the area of human health, especially in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, had become indispensable in view of their effectiveness in disease prevention and treatment. Oman had developed a long-term strategy for the health sector covering the period up to 2050. Cancer control was a top priority because of the expected increase in the incidence of the disease in the years ahead. The Sultanate had hosted an imPACT mission in January 2013 to assess the country's cancer control capacities and needs. The mission had been composed not only of Agency experts but also of representatives of WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. The recommendations contained in the mission's report would be carefully studied by health-sector officials with a view to elaborating a comprehensive cancer control programme. Oman would continue to rely on Agency support for the implementation of the recommendations.

122. His delegation noted with satisfaction the considerable progress that had been made in implementing the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety in many key areas, in strengthening its review services, assessing weak points in nuclear installations, and enhancing local and regional radiological and nuclear emergency preparedness and response capacities.

123. After undertaking an in-depth study of the creation and development of the radiation safety infrastructure in Oman with a view to promoting various peaceful applications of nuclear energy, his country had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Both conventions had entered into force on 26 August 2013. In 2010 Oman had ratified the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. It hoped to participate constructively and effectively in the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the parties to the conventions. His delegation urged all States to accede to the nuclear and radiation safety instruments with a view to ensuring the universality of the safety regime and protecting all States without exception from nuclear accidents.

124. The Sultanate of Oman, like the other member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, looked forward to the Agency's assistance in reviewing the Regional Radiological and Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Plan that was currently being drawn up with a view to ensuring its compliance with Agency nuclear and radiological safety standards. It also hoped for the Agency's support in building the capacity of the members of the Council to deal with any risks stemming from radiological or nuclear accidents. Oman had submitted a national technical cooperation project aimed at enhancing its preparedness and capacity to respond to radiological emergencies for inclusion in the Agency's technical cooperation programme for 2014–2015. His country considered that all nuclear installations and all uses of nuclear and radioactive sources should comply with the highest safety and security standards so that they posed no threat to human beings or the environment.

125. The International Conference on Nuclear Security held in Vienna in July 2013 had afforded a valuable opportunity for exchanges of information and views on future challenges and trends and on the Agency's Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017. The Conference had demonstrated the urgent need to discuss nuclear security issues at all levels, including among technicians, experts and decision-makers from all countries without exception, in order to establish a solid global security regime and to review and assess relevant activities undertaken by States and international organizations.

126. Considerable progress had been made in recent years in developing global nuclear security. A number of international and regional initiatives had been launched to promote the security of nuclear material and facilities and of radioactive sources. In addition, a large number of countries had ratified

international treaties on nuclear security and had implemented relevant Security Council resolutions. The Agency had played a pivotal role in that context by organizing training and awareness-raising courses, in which experts from Oman had participated, by publishing a series of documents on nuclear security containing recommendations and guidelines, and by organizing advisory and review services for States. His country urged the Agency to ensure the full implementation of the Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017 and it supported action to develop a comprehensive nuclear security plan for every country. Oman was seeking, in coordination with the Agency, to complete such a plan by the end of 2013.

127. The Sultanate of Oman, together with other Arab and friendly States, had been calling for many years for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. Unfortunately, no progress had been made in that regard. The international conference on the subject scheduled for 2012 had not been held, although it had been envisaged in the Action Plan and the Final Document adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Oman was still committed to the convening of such a conference, since it would play a vital role in achieving stability, security and peace in a region where those elements were urgently needed, so that the region could devote its energy to meeting the challenges of sustainable development.

Mr Labbé-Villa (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

128. Mr VINHAS (Brazil), welcoming the theme of the 2013 Scientific Forum, said that his country was pleased to see the Agency's growing involvement in the preservation of the marine environment, and had noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre announced at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio in 2012.

129. Brazil acknowledged with great satisfaction the results of the International Conference on Nuclear Security held in Vienna in July. His country had contributed actively to the Ministerial Declaration adopted, which had advanced important principles and concepts, including the need for further progress with respect to NPT and disarmament obligations, and the fact that nuclear security must not be invoked as a means to hamper the use and development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

130. His Government had cooperated fruitfully with the Agency in implementing nuclear security measures at public events and looked forward to continuation of that relationship for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. It intended to share its experience with other interested countries hosting major events.

131. The Fukushima accident had led many countries, including Brazil, to reassess and further strengthen their national nuclear safety framework, and Brazil looked forward to the continued implementation of the Agency's Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. In addition to the Fukushima comprehensive report to be published by the end of 2014, his country would appreciate more information on related events of concern, such as the leakages of radioactive water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

132. Brazil, for its part, was continuing to implement its response plan to the accident at Fukushima Daiichi. Its own safety standards were reassessed regularly, and the National Nuclear Authority had elaborated new regulations for the evaluation and approval of sites for nuclear power plants, taking into account the occurrence of possible extreme external events. New legislation had also been adopted concerning the national framework for emergency preparedness.

133. At the regional level, Brazil had been contributing actively to the Ibero–American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, and derived satisfaction from its increased cooperation with the Agency and other relevant organizations.

134. Brazil, which was both a recipient and a donor country, and one of the ten countries that offered the largest number of experts and lecturers for the technical cooperation programme, firmly supported the strengthening of the programme, which must be provided with sufficient, assured and predictable resources. It welcomed the progress made in 2013 regarding synchronization of the technical cooperation programme cycle and the regular budget cycle.

135. Brazil had welcomed the recent visit of the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation, which had provided an opportunity to examine Brazil's partnership with the Department of Technical Cooperation and explore new means of advancing its cooperation with developing countries in other regions, including through mechanisms such as ARCAL.

136. Brazil had been supportive of the Agency's efforts to promote more efficient and effective safeguards in strict accordance with the relevant agreements entered into by Member States with the Agency, and taking into account the necessary distinction between legal agreements and voluntary commitments, such as the additional protocol. However, the report on the State-level concept submitted to the Board some weeks previously had fallen short of expectations in terms of the information and clarification provided on several issues related to its implementation. It had also sent equivocal signals as regards the proclaimed non-discriminatory application to all Member States. The Director General's decision to prepare a supplementary report was a first step in the right direction, and Brazil hoped that the report would be circulated as soon as possible to allow due time for its consideration before discussion at the Board's session in June 2014.

137. One issue arising out of the State-level concept that required further consideration was the handling of sensitive information, including from open sources and third parties. Advances in communications and cyber technologies had allowed for frequent cases of manipulation, fabrication, access to commercial and technological information, as well as the invasion of citizens' data and privacy, and the Agency should review the existing rules and procedures to ensure the protection of information, its use in a secure, credible and impartial manner, and the Secretariat's accountability to Member States.

138. Noting that nuclear-weapon States appeared to have been excluded from the scope of the report on the State-level concept, he said that another issue of concern was the lingering imbalance and double standards in the NPT regime. The Agency must promote the equitable and full implementation of the mutually reinforcing goals of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Brazil looked forward to the conclusions of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, to be held in New York the following week, and to the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Mexico in February 2014.

139. The holding of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was of great significance to the credibility and integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Brazil hoped that such an event would take place at the earliest possible convenience, and was ready to share its experience that had led to the creation of the Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and paved the way for other initiatives by Brazil and Argentina to promote the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

140. Mr MCCOOK (Jamaica) said that his country attached great importance to the vital work of the Agency in fostering nuclear safety and security and in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. It had a strong interest in the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology

and applications and continued to benefit significantly in that connection, including from knowledge transfer, fellowships and scientific visits.

141. Jamaica had acceded to the Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) in November 2011 and attached great importance to its cooperation with the Agency through that regional mechanism.

142. Jamaica supported the Agency's efforts to deepen its collaboration with the Caribbean, including through the co-hosting of subregional workshops. In December 2013, his country would be hosting an Agency meeting on nuclear law for Member States in the Caribbean region. Approximately 22 participants from 11 Agency Member States in the Caribbean were expected to attend and would have the opportunity to exchange views and develop a broad understanding of all aspects of nuclear law.

143. Jamaica recognized the value and impact of the technical cooperation activities and would continue to make efforts to meet its obligations in relation to the technical cooperation programme despite current resource challenges. His country had benefited from technical cooperation projects in several areas and was actively engaged with the Division for Latin America in developing projects in areas of high national importance, including on health and water resources management. Like other countries of the Caribbean Community, Jamaica was particularly interested in addressing the grave challenges posed by noncommunicable diseases, and considered nuclear medicine and Agency support to have a crucial role in that connection.

144. Jamaica was pleased that, in response to its request, the Agency had undertaken an imPACT mission in the country in March, which had assessed the country's cancer control capacity and its needs for the effective implementation of its radiation medicine programme as a component of the comprehensive National Cancer Control Programme. Suitable project proposals and potential sources of funding had also been explored.

145. His country had begun the conversion of its reactor from HEU to LEU and expressed appreciation to the Agency and the Government of the United States for their assistance, in particular under the PUI. Noting that the project and supply agreement between Jamaica, the United States and the Agency was expected to be signed that month, he encouraged other States to reduce the amount of HEU used in their research reactors with Agency support.

146. Jamaica resolutely opposed any expansion in the number of States developing or possessing nuclear weapons. It shared the concerns expressed regarding the failure of some States to become parties to the NPT or to comply fully with their obligations under that instrument, and encouraged all members of the international community to comply with the treaties and mechanisms governing the development and use of nuclear material and to ensure that their nuclear programmes were brought under the appropriate safeguards regime.

147. Jamaica remained supportive of actions to strengthen nuclear security. It had acceded to the CPPNM in 2005, had signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and its additional protocol had been in force since 2003. It was also working towards following the guidance contained in the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and had joined the Agency's Incident and Trafficking Database. National legislation regarding nuclear and radiation matters was being advanced and the draft law covering radiation issues was now being finalized.

148. The Fukushima accident had served as a reminder of the importance of effective and well-coordinated responses to nuclear incidents. Jamaica appreciated the updates provided by the

Government of Japan and noted the shared concern at the recent leakage of contaminated water. It was hopeful that the response and recovery efforts would be successful.

149. Noting that the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety provided a valuable mechanism for channelling efforts to strengthen global cooperation on nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, he said that Jamaica, like other members of the Caribbean Community, remained opposed to the transportation of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea and was concerned about the potential impact of any incident relating to such shipments on the region.

150. Jamaica supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and called on all parties concerned to take the steps necessary to ensure the convening of a conference concerning the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

151. In conclusion, he said that Jamaica remained committed to the goals of the Agency and was confident that its valuable and practical cooperation with the organization would continue.

152. Mr TOUQAN (Jordan) underscored the importance of the Agency's role in transferring knowledge and technology to developing countries with the aim of building up their scientific and technological capacities. He also commended its work on the application and assessment of safeguards, and its promotion of nuclear safety, especially in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

153. The Agency had been promoting international cooperation for decades with a view to finding scientific and practical solutions to the world's development challenges. Its hosting of the International Conference on Nuclear Security had enhanced awareness of the need for all countries to support the Agency as a global forum for the strengthening of nuclear security.

154. At the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century held in Saint Petersburg in June 2013, the Agency had underscored the importance of nuclear energy as a time-tested, safe and economical technology that was destined to play an increasingly important role in achieving the aims of sustainable development and energy safety in the twenty-first century.

155. Most countries, particularly developing countries such as Jordan, had experienced growing energy problems during the past decade. The fact that roughly 96% of Jordan's energy consumption was based on imports placed a heavy burden on the economy. The severe shortage of water resources was an additional problem. The Jordanian Government had addressed those challenges by developing a national energy strategy in 2007 aimed at promoting the use of various local and alternative energy sources. Nuclear energy, as a key alternative source, would help to convert Jordan from an energy importing country to an exporting country by 2030 and would provide low-cost electricity, thereby supporting steady economic growth and enabling the country to benefit from economies of scale.

156. Jordan endeavoured to comply strictly with nuclear safety standards in implementing its national nuclear energy strategy and opted for modern and safe nuclear technology. The Atomic Energy Commission was completing the final stages of a procedure to select appropriate technology encompassing technology suppliers and strategic partners who would assist in financing and training Jordanian human resources and in operating the power plant.

157. He was pleased to announce the recent decision by the Jordanian Government to adopt nuclear energy as one of its options for electricity generation and its approval of Amra in eastern Badia, about 60 kilometres from the capital Amman, as the site for the first nuclear power reactor. In addition, it had decided to establish a Government-owned nuclear utility company to manage the project.

158. Jordan supported measures to create a global civil liability system that would strengthen the provisions of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. His country was

completing the procedures for ratification of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Protocol amending the Convention.

159. Further preparatory steps were being taken for the use of uranium sources and ore as nuclear fuel in future Jordanian nuclear power plants. It was hoped to complete uranium exploration activities in central Jordan by the end of 2013 so that the final results could be used during the first stage of the studies to be conducted under the supervision of international experts.

160. In addition, a building permit had been issued for the construction of the Jordanian nuclear research and training reactor, with the assistance of experts from the Agency and the Korean Nuclear Safety and Security Commission, after two basic requirements had been met, namely completion of an environmental study and a review of the first safety report. The reactor was expected to play a vital role in training future generations of nuclear researchers, scientists and engineers and would also be used to produce the radioisotopes required for medical, agricultural and industrial purposes. The reactor would begin operating in 2016.

161. As part of the Atomic Energy Commission's action to train highly qualified human resources, it had taken advantage of 60 opportunities under bilateral cooperation agreements for further education in nuclear science and engineering. It had also built a subcritical nuclear facility in cooperation with the China Atomic Energy Authority that would be used to train students in the Engineering Faculty of Jordan University of Science and Technology.

162. In the interests of transparency and with a view to promoting public acceptance of nuclear energy, the Atomic Energy Commission had organized numerous activities and initiatives concerning the Jordanian nuclear programme, including an awareness-raising forum involving international experts and supported by the Agency that targeted decision-makers, especially members of the National Assembly. The Commission had also hosted a regional workshop organized by the Agency for representatives of countries in the region that were seeking to use nuclear energy. An international advisory committee composed of scientists and prominent personalities from the nuclear scene would be appointed to assess the Jordanian nuclear programme and to issue regular reports to the Government and the general public.

163. Jordan attached great importance to the safeguards regime as a key element in promoting non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and confining the use of nuclear energy to peaceful applications. His country considered that the Agency was the sole authority mandated to supervise application of comprehensive safeguards in accordance with the provisions of the NPT, and it commended the Agency's continuous efforts to enhance their effectiveness. Jordan had signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency in accordance with its obligations under the NPT, as well as an additional protocol.

164. His country was firmly convinced of the danger posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security and, in particular, to stability in the Middle East region, which continued to be adversely affected by the failure to implement resolutions concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It was essential for Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards, thereby ensuring the universality of the Treaty in the region and paving the way for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Such a step would promote peace and security and encourage States to concentrate on socio-economic development rather than on an arms race that impeded development and led to escalating tensions.

165. Jordan had benefited from numerous national, regional and international projects under the Agency's technical cooperation programme, including projects to strengthen the country's infrastructure in preparation for the building and operation of the nuclear power plant, to create a uranium extraction laboratory, to develop the country's safety assessment capacity, to ensure optimum

use of the nuclear research reactor, and to strengthen the radioactive waste management infrastructure. Other important projects concerned the enhancement of cancer treatment capacities and the Centre for Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME).

166. Jordan had participated in various Agency activities under the INPRO and was particularly interested in innovations in the development and use of small and medium-sized nuclear reactors.

167. Jordan appreciated the support provided under the Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (ARASIA), which had greatly contributed to cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

168. His country welcomed the Agency's efforts to establish an LEU nuclear fuel bank in Kazakhstan on the understanding that the initiative would not undermine States' rights to produce or expand the production of nuclear fuel.

169. Jordan welcomed the progress made towards the final disposal of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste and called for appropriate measures to provide adequate financial resources and to develop supportive strategies for their safe management.

170. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian Arab Republic had been among the first States to accede to the NPT in 1968 and had always adhered to the Treaty's noble aims and principles in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. International cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy served an important role in enhancing the related knowledge and capabilities of Member States and was thus of great benefit to them. Article IV of the NPT provided for the inalienable right of State Parties to produce, develop and use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Consequently, it was Syria's conviction that no interpretation in that regard should impinge upon that legitimate right of Member States.

171. His country was adamant that no interpretation of Article IV of the NPT, which provided for the inalienable right of State Parties to produce, develop and use atomic energy for peaceful purposes, should impinge on that legitimate right of States. The implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in Syria had been placed on the agenda of Board of Governors following an attack by Israel on Syria's sovereignty, resulting in the destruction of a military building in no way connected to nuclear activities. It had been a clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter and should have been roundly condemned by the international community. Furthermore, certain States had failed to provide information relating to the destroyed building in Dair Alzour in a timely manner and had thus seriously impeded the Agency in discharging its responsibilities under the NPT and its safeguards agreement with Syria.

172. Regrettably, all that notwithstanding, the Board had adopted a resolution based on a hypothetical conclusion, without any compelling evidence, ignoring calls from many Member States for further dialogue and cooperation and for the issue to remain within the confines of the Agency. Certain Member States continued to the current day to adduce that reasoning, reiterated in various reports of the Director General, in pursuit of their own political interests and to pressure Syria into adopting additional measures which Syria had the sovereign right to adopt as and when it deemed appropriate. Syria was fully committed to cooperating with the Agency in order to resolve outstanding issues related to the Dair Alzour site and the plan of action agreed to by the Agency and Syria was testament to that commitment.

173. Syria harboured grave concerns over recent threats by certain States of attacks against Syria and sites under Agency safeguards and their attempts to subjugate and destabilize Syria directly or indirectly, via their agents in the region, which were a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and the obligations and responsibilities of States as permanent members of the United Nations

Security Council, and also of General Conference resolution GC(XXXIV)/RES/533 of 1990 concerning the prohibition of all armed attacks or threats against nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes whether under construction or in operation. The General Conference should reflect the concerns of its Member States regarding the security of nuclear installations susceptible to military attack.

174. The notion of State-level safeguards remained unclear to many Member States and required further elaboration and exchange of views; thus, the Secretariat's readiness to issue an additional explanatory document was welcome. It was crucial that the approach not in any manner exceed the obligations of States under their comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency.

175. The adoption of General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 in 2009 had sent a clear message to Israel, expressing the continued concern of many Member States over its possession of nuclear capabilities outside of international controls and the threat that it posed to regional and global security and calling on it to place its nuclear installations under a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. However, Israel continued to treat the resolution with disdain, as it did all comparable resolutions adopted in various organizations and international forums, and intransigently refused to cooperate with the international community. Regrettably, certain influential Member States, including nuclear States, which championed the universal application of the NPT, hypocritically turned a blind eye to Israel's nuclear capabilities and, in breach of their own obligations under the NPT, continued to support and assist Israel in developing them. Israel feigned innocence over its nuclear activities, exercised outside any international controls, and large nuclear arsenal, which posed an immense threat to the countries in the region, while persistently undermining related international initiatives. However, the international community would ultimately see through Israel's diversionary tactics, obfuscation and manipulation, including the raising of political issues that were exclusively the domestic affairs of Syria and the brushing aside of the country's own international record, replete with instances of occupation, suppression, eviction, blockading and slaughter of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese peoples. Then the international community would recognize the need vigorously to address Israel's long-standing threat to the Middle East.

176. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had called for the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. All States in the Middle East had expressed their readiness to take practical steps towards that end; Israel, however, continued in its defiance of the international community by refusing to accede to the NPT or to place its installations under a comprehensive safeguards agreement, with the unwavering support of its allies. His delegation profoundly regretted that the conference had not taken place in 2012 and questioned the legal authority of the unilateral announcement of the postponement made by one of the State Parties entrusted to convene the conference, in defiance of the mandatory provisions of the Final Document. The excuses proffered were neither acceptable nor credible. The obvious reason for the postponement was the lack of political will by Israel to accept the initiative and to renounce its nuclear capabilities. The international community had again been stopped in its tracks by Israel's indifference and refusal to cooperate under the cover of its allies, which relieved it of its international obligations. Syria, meanwhile, had actively cooperated with the facilitator, making constructive proposals in a transparent manner and displaying considerable flexibility in respect of a great number of initiatives, with a view to ensuring the success of the conference. Sadly, however, no progress could be achieved. In that regard, Syria reiterated its call for the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 at the NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference as promptly as possible.

177. His country highly valued the Agency's efforts in preparation for the Blue Planet scientific forum and other forums on the margins of the General Conference dealing with important scientific

and human issues. It encouraged the Agency to channel its efforts towards the issues of health, food and water security and to apply its potential to assisting developing countries in their endeavours to remedy water shortages and combat drought, which could have devastating humanitarian and economic consequences.

178. Through its specialized agencies, Syria strongly supported the technical cooperation programme, including both the regional activities organized by the Agency and the Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (ARASIA). ARASIA was a cornerstone of regional partnership and cooperation and his delegation hoped that it would receive increased support from the Agency. It also hoped that the Agency would continue to provide technical assistance to Syria, despite the extraordinary conditions that the country was facing, particularly as that support would help lead to practical solutions to the country's development issues. In that context he expressed his delegation's gratitude to the Secretariat and commended it on its significant contribution to the success of technical cooperation projects.

179. Ms TAN Yee Woan (Singapore) said that 2013 had been a challenging year for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The DPRK had conducted another nuclear test in February, in clear breach of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and had yet to return to the NPT or resume its cooperation with the Agency. At the same time, Iran had yet to address adequately the allegations of possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme. Singapore fully supported the right of sovereign States to use nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the NPT. It therefore strongly urged Iran to clarify all outstanding issues and restore the trust and confidence of the international community that its nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful in nature.

180. The fact that three States remained outside the global non-proliferation regime undermined collective efforts towards global nuclear disarmament, as would the maintenance of the deterrence policy of the nuclear-weapon States (NWSs). Although several NWFZs had been established, the NWSs had yet to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to all the treaties establishing those zones, and had either placed, or were seeking to place, broad and substantive reservations that potentially undermined the very object and purpose of the NWFZs. Her delegation strongly urged all NWSs to sign and ratify all relevant protocols as soon as possible and without reservations. At the same time, it strongly encouraged all relevant parties to engage in sincere dialogue towards the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

181. Her delegation was pleased to note some of the positive developments in the area of nuclear safety as a result of the Agency's ongoing effort to assist its Member States in implementing the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, including the establishment of an Emergency Preparedness and Response Expert Group early in 2013 to which Singapore was happy to contribute.

182. Unfortunately, there remained differences of opinion in some key areas of the Agency's work on nuclear safety. Some Member States continued to view peer review missions with suspicion. Many also questioned whether it was possible to work towards achieving an international standard or the highest level of safety standards, asserting that no such standard existed. Peer review missions sought, *inter alia*, to provide an objective, professional and independent assessment of the gaps that needed to be addressed and should therefore be viewed positively. Countries intending to embark on nuclear energy programmes should be encouraged to welcome and host such missions. All States should strive to achieve and implement the highest possible level of safety standards.

183. The Agency had an important role to play in assisting Member States to promote the global, regional and national nuclear security infrastructure, and her country encouraged the Agency to

continue its work in that area. It noted the International Conference on Nuclear Security convened by the Agency in July.

184. Singapore would continue to support the Agency in its work in the important areas of safety, security, safeguards and verification, as well as in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, and had hosted a number of fellowships and training courses since the previous session of the General Conference.

185. At the regional level, it fully supported efforts to strengthen capacity and cooperation on nuclear matters in south-east Asia. Singapore welcomed recent developments with regard to the establishment of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, which sought to enhance regulatory cooperation in the region in order to promote greater nuclear safety, security and safeguards within the ASEAN community. Singapore hoped that such national efforts and closer regional cooperation would be important building blocks towards the establishment of a more robust nuclear safety and security global infrastructure.

186. Ms DENGO (Costa Rica), having congratulated the Director General on his reappointment, said that Costa Rica welcomed the new applications for membership, in particular from the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, which would increase the number of members from the Latin American and Caribbean region. The increase in the number of members from that region in recent years had raised the region's profile in the Agency and should lead to greater attention being paid to activities and initiatives involving GRULAC countries.

187. One year previously, her country had taken a seat on the Agency's Board of Governors for the first time after an absence of several decades. Costa Rica was satisfied at the positive role that it had played in the most important discussions taking place in the Board. For the remainder of its term on the Board, Costa Rica would be guided by the need for independent management and to achieve an appropriate balance among the Agency's statutory activities.

188. With regard to nuclear safety and security, she drew attention to the Agency's work over the past two years to implement the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. The Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held by the Government of Japan under the auspices of the Agency in December 2012 had been an excellent opportunity to discuss progress and the strengthening of nuclear safety around the world.

189. Costa Rica thanked the Agency for its assistance concerning optimization of regulatory capacities and the proper disposal of disused radioactive sources. It had been pleased to host a regional meeting on safety aspects in national radioactive waste management strategies, as part of the Agency's efforts to provide greater support in that area.

190. Costa Rica had taken decisive steps to significantly boost the nuclear security of its radioactive sources and to cooperate with the Agency and other Member States in strengthening nuclear security at the regional level. It had ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in February 2013, and the legislative process for the prompt ratification of the amendment to the CPPNM had been initiated. Furthermore, in August 2013, Costa Rica had hosted a workshop at which representatives of countries from the subregion, in cooperation with the Government of Canada, had analysed the requirements for the implementation of the two instruments.

191. With the assistance of the Agency, Costa Rica was also drawing up an INSSP, which it trusted would provide the necessary technical framework for the measures to be taken in the area of nuclear security in the coming years.

192. Because of its particular mandate, experience and expertise, the Agency should occupy a central place in the development of international nuclear security, based on the joint efforts of all its Member

States. Her delegation therefore welcomed the successful holding of the International Conference on Nuclear Security, held in Vienna in July 2013, which had constituted a milestone with regard to the Agency's role in that important area of its activities.

193. Costa Rica highly valued the Agency's technical cooperation activities, and participated actively in the Agency's technical cooperation programme, both through its national programme and through the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. She congratulated the Division of Latin America for its achievements over the previous year, including becoming the region with the highest rate of project implementation. It welcomed the efforts to make the technical cooperation programme more efficient and ensure that it had a greater impact on social, economic and technological development, taking into account the special characteristics of countries, including the relative scale of projects, financial capacity and development priorities.

194. The 2012–2013 technical cooperation cycle had been very positive for Costa Rica and had involved projects that were fully consistent with the objectives of the country's national development plan. Her country hoped that it would be possible to maintain such a positive experience with the new national projects that it had established for the 2014–2015 technical cooperation cycle and that, with the Agency's technical, financial and administrative support, Costa Rica would be able to continue to have effective and significant projects that offered tangible benefits to the country.

195. Among the successes achieved, she wished to highlight the work carried out by Costa Rica's Environmental Pollution Research Centre as a collaborating centre and reference laboratory for the Agency, and noted that the Centre had become a leading research centre in environmental studies in Latin America, thanks to the support received to date from the Agency.

196. Furthermore, Costa Rica's cancer treatment capabilities had been significantly improved with the Agency's advice. A regional training course on scanner maintenance had been held in San José in 2013 and the sixth Congress of the Latin American Medical Physics Association had been organized with Agency support.

197. In addition, she drew attention to the work being carried out under ARCAL to improve the management and expand the scope of the regional cooperation programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. Costa Rica had hosted a technical meeting in March 2013 to develop the new Regional Strategic Profile 2016–2021 and was leading the preparation of a communication strategy for ARCAL.

198. The IWAVE project being implemented with funding from the PUI had generated highly relevant benefits for Costa Rica, particularly by increasing the knowledge necessary for the optimum utilization and distribution of water resources. Costa Rica was also pleased that the results of the work undertaken by its experts and institutions with the help of the Agency's Isotope Hydrology Section were soon to be extended to other Member States.

199. Costa Rica fully supported the modernization of the Agency's nuclear sciences and applications laboratories at Seibersdorf and congratulated the Secretariat on the progress made in the planning of the project. It was to be hoped that the laboratories would be able to incorporate a Cancer Training Centre, which would be of particular benefit to developing countries.

200. Costa Rica considered PACT as a valuable mechanism for comprehensive cancer control in all developing countries, and encouraged the continuation and strengthening of its work.

201. It was essential that the Agency be provided with the financial resources it needed to fulfil all of its statutory obligations, and that a proportionate balance be maintained in the allocation of those resources among the three pillars of the Agency's activities. The goal of ensuring sufficient, assured and predictable resources for the TCF had still not been achieved and Costa Rica therefore viewed with optimism the positive results achieved in 2013 by the working group considering the level of the

Regular Budget and the TCF targets for the biennium 2014–2015. Similarly, the establishment of the Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities, as agreed by the Board of Governors in July, constituted an excellent opportunity to consider options that would help ensure that all the pillars of the Agency's activities had proportionate and regular resources.

202. Costa Rica firmly supported the Agency's verification activities, which were essential for the stability of the non-proliferation regime, and called on countries that did not yet have an additional protocol in force to take the necessary steps to that end. It was important for the Agency to have all the tools and authority it needed to implement its mandate under its Statute and the NPT with objectivity, technical rigour, impartiality, independence, reliability and transparency.

203. Having noted that the 33 member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) had recently affirmed that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was their complete elimination, she said that her country advocated a peaceful, multilateral and negotiated settlement of any conflict and encouraged all Member States to meet their commitments to the Agency.

204. Ms VILLANUEVA BRACHO (Mexico) said that, since her country had begun its nuclear activities almost 60 years previously, nuclear power had made a great contribution to Mexico's economic, scientific and technological development. Her country would continue to operate its Laguna Verde nuclear power plant in accordance with the highest international safety and productivity standards and share best international practices.

205. Mexico's experience in some areas, such as radiation protection, nuclear medicine and instrumentation and food irradiation, was recognized internationally. That had been possible largely thanks to the technical cooperation programme, in which her country was active, and the contributions of all those countries that shared their experience, knowledge and scientific and technological advances in the field.

206. Institutions in the nuclear sector in Mexico had made highly significant progress, and each year her country received more than 40 scholars from elsewhere in Latin America and a growing number of other countries. The National Institute of Nuclear Research and the National Commission on Nuclear Safety and Safeguards hosted regional and international workshops and meetings and made available a wide range of experts.

207. Mexico was committed to the use of cleaner energy sources, having undertaken to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30% by 2020 and 50% by 2050. Nuclear energy was therefore viewed as an important option, as provided for in the National Energy Strategy 2013–2027 that had been approved by Congress earlier in the year, and her country therefore attached the highest priority to cooperation with the Agency.

208. Her country, which had repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to the institutional framework for the peaceful use of atomic energy and nuclear safety, welcomed the Agency's work to promote nuclear security and prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material. In May, it had hosted the 8th Plenary Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which had defined the activities for the following two years of the Initiative and would help to strengthen security in the participating countries.

209. In September 2012, Mexico had formally joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and was committed to helping the international community control exports of nuclear and radioactive materials.

210. In 2012, her country had ratified the amendment to the CPPNM, which it hoped would enter into force in the near future. Mexico offered its cooperation to the Agency to promote its signature and ratification and had supported and sponsored various forums, mostly in the Americas, for that purpose.

211. Mexico paid tribute to the Ibero–American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies and acknowledged its work to maintain high levels of nuclear and radiation safety and security in the Ibero–American region.

212. The cooperation and synergy between the Agency and the Forum maximized complementarity and had allowed a solid technical programme to develop. The work of the Forum in the area of nuclear security, including on regulatory practices in ageing and life extension of nuclear power plants and stress testing, had been taken into account by other regulatory agencies worldwide. It had also been recognized in the recent statements issued by the Ibero–American Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Forum had recently completed the development of a software tool to facilitate risk assessment in radiotherapy, which had already demonstrated its value in contributing to a high level of radiation safety. She hoped that it would be disseminated more widely in cooperation with the Agency.

213. Mexico urged the Forum and the Agency to continue their cooperation and to work together with other agencies that shared similar goals and interests, such as PAHO and WHO.

214. In the area of nuclear safety, her country was constantly reviewing the rules and guidelines issued by the Agency. The timely intervention by Agency experts had been fundamental following the Fukushima accident, and the information generated had been of great value in enabling all countries operating nuclear power plants to learn lessons. Stress tests had recently been conducted at the Laguna Verde plant to confirm the highest standards of procedures, equipment and trained personnel. Her delegation hoped that the situation in Fukushima would become stable as soon as possible.

215. Mexico called on the Agency to convene a group of geologists and tectonics experts to assess the level of risk in the world of the recurrence of an event similar to Fukushima and, on the basis of the findings of their studies, to focus efforts on improving the safety of nuclear power plants.

216. Mexico regarded technical cooperation as one of the fundamental activities of the Agency and a decisive factor in fostering the development of Member States. While the technical cooperation report for 2012 faithfully recorded the efforts being made, it also showed that much remained to be done. The Agency should therefore allocate increasing resources to promote more activities within the technical cooperation programme, especially through national projects.

217. Efforts should also be made to measure the actual impact of projects as a way of promoting the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and informing the public and decision-makers about its benefit. The Agency's action to improve the efficiency of regional technical cooperation programmes should also be stepped up.

218. Peaceful nuclear applications contributed greatly to the development of countries and the Agency's work was essential for achieving that goal. For 2013, Mexico had paid its full share of the TCF target and the Regular Budget. It called on all countries to do likewise and recognized the effort made by those countries which, despite the global economic crisis, paid their contributions in full.

219. Her country acknowledged the Agency's fundamental role in the field of nuclear verification and noted that the efficient and effective implementation of safeguards also required strong cooperation by all NPT Member States. Mexico, as a State party to the NPT, supported the right of all States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses, in full compliance with Agency safeguards agreements with the Agency. At the same time, it was essential that all States had the necessary safeguards in place to preclude diversion from civilian to military programmes.

220. Mexico had always been a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as evidenced by its promotion of the Tlatelolco Treaty, the first treaty of its kind to ban nuclear weapons in a populated region and a model for other parts of the world.

221. Mexico was firmly convinced that nuclear energy played a crucial role in addressing contemporary challenges and promoting sustainable economic growth. It remained committed to working with the Agency and the international community to prevent nuclear terrorism and the creation of nuclear weapons, and to make the use of nuclear energy safer.

222. Mr BUZDUGAN (Republic of Moldova), noting that his country was actively engaged in supporting the international non-proliferation regime, reported that Moldovan authorities were involved in the implementation of nine projects under the auspices of the European Commission's centre of excellence and that the Republic of Moldova–United States action plan on combating the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials had been in force since 2011. A few months previously, the Republic of Moldova had presented its second progress report on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and it had recently updated its INSSP with the cooperation of the Agency's Office of Nuclear Security.

223. With the support of its partners, namely the European Commission, the Government of the United States and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, the Republic of Moldova had managed to establish an efficient domestic nuclear security infrastructure. Outlining some of the initiatives implemented, he said that the national strategy for radioactive waste management was now ready for parliamentary approval and a national strategy on the security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials was currently being developed. A national Nuclear Security Support Centre, which had been established by the national regulatory body and the Technical University of the Republic of Moldova, would contribute to the education of national trainers, and provide specialized training for different domestic sectors. The Republic of Moldova's participation in international and domestic exercises and workshops, which had been facilitated by its partners and other donors, attested to the progress the country had made in consolidating its nuclear security infrastructure.

224. The Republic of Moldova thanked its partners for the assistance that they were providing to help the national regulatory body establish the infrastructure necessary for combating the illicit trafficking of nuclear or radioactive materials. His country would continue to work with donor countries to establish an efficient detection infrastructure in the country.

225. With the support of the OSCE, inspections had been initiated at the metallurgical plant in Rybnitsa, which was located on the Left Bank of the Dniester — a region not yet under the control of the central Government, and an authorization for the plant's further activity had been issued. Noting that more than 900 radioactive sources had been removed from the region and placed at the central radioactive waste repository, he said that the Republic of Moldova would continue its efforts with regard to regulatory activities covering the whole of its territory.

226. The Republic of Moldova benefited fully from the Agency's technical cooperation programme. The country's goals for technical cooperation were reflected in its new CPF, signed with the Agency in November 2012, and focused on areas including human resources training in the health sector, development of regulatory body capacities, new technologies for waste management, and the efficient use of nuclear applications in industrial, agricultural and science sectors.

227. Despite the progress achieved in applying new nuclear technologies in the Republic of Moldova, there were a number of crucial sectors that were still in need of technical cooperation assistance. The Republic of Moldova was counting on the extension of new nuclear technology implementation through public-private partnerships.

228. The Republic of Moldova had also established good cooperation within the framework of the PACT and had benefited from comprehensive assistance provided to its oncology institute under that Programme.

229. The Republic of Moldova had recently ratified an additional protocol and had developed a national road map to ensure its smooth implementation at the national level.

230. Noting that the Parliament had recently ratified an amendment to the Agency Statute, he said that the Republic of Moldova fully supported the Agency's activities and remained committed to fulfilling its financial obligations towards the Agency in a timely manner.

231. Mr ERFANI (Afghanistan) said that, although his country had not developed a nuclear power programme, it derived considerable benefits from its collaboration with the Agency and highly appreciated the Agency's efforts to strengthen global, scientific and technical cooperation on nuclear safety and security through universal, independent and transparent mechanisms. His country particularly welcomed the Agency's efforts to help Member States address socio-economic problems, prevent proliferation, and advocate the cause of environmental safety. With Agency support, Afghanistan had drafted a nuclear law, and was also drafting regulations concerning radiation protection, transportation of nuclear material and waste management.

232. Noting that final draft of Afghanistan's CPF had been submitted to the Agency for assessment, he stressed the importance of his country's technical cooperation with the Agency, in particular in the area of human health. Afghanistan and the Agency were currently working on the establishment of a comprehensive cancer control centre at the Ali Abad Teaching Hospital, and work was continuing to establish a nuclear medicine service at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in Kabul. He thanked the relevant Agency staff members for their hard work in that connection.

233. With continued support from its partners in the international community, Afghanistan had made significant progress in various areas over the previous decade, including with regard to the establishment of the first Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission (AAEHC). Although continued and enhanced technical, financial and training support were required to enable the Commission to discharge its responsibilities successfully, Afghanistan was committed to ensuring an effective mechanism to enhance cooperation between the Commission, the NLOs and focal points to derive the maximum benefits from Agency programmes and projects and attain the Millennium Development Goals.

234. The Agency must be adequately financed if it was to undertake its important tasks comprehensively and effectively. Afghanistan commended all donors for their generous contributions to the TCF, which remained essential for addressing current global challenges, in particular those of the LDCs, and supporting sustainable development.

235. Noting the renovation of the Agency's nuclear sciences and applications laboratories in Seibersdorf, he said that his Government sought measures to increase the utilization of nuclear and isotopic applications in the country, including with respect to agriculture and water resource management.

236. Afghanistan supported all measures to strengthen nuclear safety. It commended the work of the Agency and several Member States in identifying safety measures to be implemented following the accident at Fukushima Daiichi, including improved global communication.

237. While responsibility for nuclear security rested entirely with each State, the Agency should provide increased support to assist States in securing their nuclear material in view of the anticipated global growth in nuclear applications and the associated complex and transnational ramifications. A potential terrorist attack utilizing nuclear or radioactive material constituted a serious threat to

international peace and security. Afghanistan therefore welcomed the strong Nuclear Security Plan for 2014–2017, and commended all Member States that had made fresh pledges to the NSF.

238. In closing, he said that Afghanistan looked forward to continuing its constructive cooperation with the Agency to harness the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and expressed appreciation of the support his country had received as it continued its transition towards self-reliance, stability and prosperity.

239. Ms QUINTERO CORREA (Colombia), confirming her country's commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in its foreign policy, said that progress was needed towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Forty-three years after the entry into force of the NPT, the nuclear threat remained, not only through the risk of proliferation but also through the very existence of nuclear weapons. The international community had expressed its profound concern about the disastrous humanitarian consequences that could result from any use of such weapons, a concern also shared by civil society. Therefore substantive advances in the multilateral disarmament negotiations were not only important, but also urgent, to produce concrete proposals for achieving universal, transparent, irreversible and verifiable disarmament. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) had stressed similar points in the Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament that it would be presenting to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament to be held later in September.

240. As a party to the Tlatelolco Treaty, the NPT and the CTBT and as a State with a safeguards agreement and additional protocol in force, Colombia stressed the importance of the international legal framework to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and the need to make progress in complying with the provisions of those instruments as well as the commitments made at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. Her country therefore attached great importance to the 2015 NPT Review Conference as a forum for reaffirming and renewing commitments and for adopting measures towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. That was not only a goal but also a moral imperative, given the devastating, transboundary and global effects of the use of such weapons, and the inability of the international community to deal with an emergency of that type. Consequently, Colombia welcomed the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo in March 2013, which it had attended, and looked forward to the second conference to be held in Mexico in February 2014.

241. Colombia had advocated the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a contribution to regional and global peace and security. It therefore supported the efforts of the international community towards creating such a zone in the Middle East.

242. As part of her Government's commitment to the Agency, it had been working on the procedures required for the ratification of the amendments to Articles VI and XIV of the Agency's Statute.

243. Turning to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through technical cooperation, she said that knowledge transfer was vital in areas essential to development such as medicine, the environment and agriculture. The work of the Department of Technical Cooperation was key, as were the dialogue and work shared between the Programme Management Officers and national liaison offices. Colombia had worked on the submission of its national programme projects for the 2014–2015 cycle and on updating its CPF. It had also worked with regional partners on preparing projects under ARCAL for the 2014–2015 cycle and on developing the second Regional Strategic Profile for 2016–2021. It had received support from the Agency and in particular from the Government of Spain — a strategic partner with which it had enjoyed a valuable relationship for many years.

244. The Agency also played an essential role in nuclear safety and the development, improvement and updating of its standards and guides was crucial, as was cooperation in strengthening nuclear safety and radiation protection. The project in Colombia on conditioning spent sources for repatriation or long-term storage was a specific activity in line with the national radioactive waste management policy, whose establishment represented a milestone determined by the Agency for sustainable radioactive waste management infrastructures. Colombia was particularly grateful to the Government of Canada for its support with the implementation of the project.

245. With regard to the safe maritime transport of radioactive waste, her country welcomed the discussion and consultations held in 2013 between coastal and shipping States and noted the outcome of the working group on best practices in voluntary communication. Dialogue and consultation should continue with Agency participation and support.

246. She thanked the Government of the United States for the support that it had provided to help her country attain international nuclear security objectives. Colombia was also grateful for the assistance of the Office of Nuclear Security in establishing a nuclear security centre in Bogotá in 2010. In June, the centre had hosted a technical meeting on effective border control coordination for Latin American countries, where participants had exchanged information on the current status of the implementation of border control programmes in the region with a view to using experience to improve future nuclear security support programmes.

247. Colombia welcomed the International Conference on Nuclear Security held under the auspices of the Agency in July 2013 and supported the Ministerial Declaration, which stressed the importance of open and inclusive dialogue to ensure commitment and concerted action by all States. Her country recognized the importance of international cooperation and the Agency's role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in leading the coordination of international activities in the field of nuclear security while avoiding duplication and overlap.

248. Colombia supported the safeguards system and recognized the important verification work conducted by the Agency, which was the only authority competent to give assurances on the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear programmes, thus contributing to non-proliferation efforts and to maintaining to international peace and security.

249. Finally, noting in particular the Director General's efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and strengthen nuclear safety, she congratulated him on his reappointment and wished him every success in his second term.

250. Mr SLAVINSKIS (Latvia) said that the application of nuclear and radioactive materials was becoming broader, and technological advances were occurring at a rapid pace. While responsibility for the safe and secure handling of those materials and their associated infrastructure started within each State, consistent with national and multilateral norms and instruments, a common framework was necessary for security governance and safety of nuclear and radioactive materials and their associated infrastructure. Latvia therefore commended the Agency's untiring efforts to establish relevant multilateral standards and norms, and to assist States in improving nuclear safety and security. It thanked the Agency for having convened an international conference on nuclear security in July.

251. Latvia considered the technical cooperation programme an essential element of the interaction between Member States and the Agency and highly valued the work of the Department of Technical Cooperation. Latvia's mid-term technical cooperation priorities approved in 2013 included achieving a strengthened regulatory infrastructure and upgrading the radiation laboratory infrastructure and capabilities. Horizontal cooperation tools and regional projects were an important element in strengthening nuclear safety and security. Latvia was cooperating with Estonia and Lithuania as well as within the framework of the Nordic and Baltic States, including with regard to the development of

an early warning system, and its participation in a safety crisis exercise in Finland in March had contributed greatly to building national capacity. Latvia would continue to participate in training and educational activities and would work with the Department of Technical Cooperation to strengthen national capabilities in radiation safety and nuclear security.

252. Turning to nuclear safety, he said that the Fukushima Daiichi accident had demonstrated the importance of developing high international nuclear safety standards worldwide. Latvia encouraged all Member States to follow the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety in order to improve national and international nuclear safety and security standards.

253. Despite a shortage of human and financial resources, Latvia continued to promote a high safety culture among operators and raise awareness of responsibility for the possible risks associated with the use of ionizing radiation sources. Latvia was also continuously improving and monitoring its radiation protection infrastructure and was ready for the new challenges and opportunities associated with the forthcoming introduction of new medical technologies in the country, which would add another dimension to its cooperation with the Agency.

254. Mr BRENNAN (Ireland) said that a cornerstone of Ireland's foreign policy was its support for the NPT — an instrument that provided a unique framework within which States could develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes subject to binding international standards of safety, security and verification.

255. While Ireland had opted not to use nuclear energy for electricity generation, it recognized the sovereign right of every State to decide upon its own energy mix, provided that all States, without exception, seeking to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes demonstrated the peaceful nature of their nuclear activities. Full cooperation with the Agency was therefore essential since adherence to the Agency's strengthened safeguards system remained the most effective means of enabling the Agency to offer credible assurances to the international community in that regard.

256. In the area of nuclear security, he said that ongoing vigilance and planning were required in view of the considerable threats that existed. Ireland had been very pleased to participate in the International Conference on Nuclear Security in July, which had been one of the largest conferences ever held by the Agency and had offered an opportunity to review past achievements, assess current approaches and identify future trends and priorities. The Conference had reaffirmed the Agency's central role in the area of nuclear security, and he praised the organization's leadership and initiative in that key area.

257. Ireland condemned in the strongest possible terms the DPRK's latest nuclear test in February. It called on the DPRK to refrain from further provocative actions and to comply fully with its international obligations, including those under the relevant Security Council resolutions. It also encouraged the DPRK to cooperate fully with the Agency both in implementing its safeguards agreement and in resolving all outstanding issues raised by the Agency.

258. In order to dispel the international community's concerns regarding possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme, Iran should address all outstanding issues transparently and in full cooperation with the Agency.

259. Ireland urged Syria to comply with its obligations under its safeguards agreement and to cooperate with the Agency to resolve all issues concerning the destroyed Dair Alzour site and any other locations of relevance to the Agency's work.

260. International peace and security would be significantly strengthened by progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as called for in the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension

Conference. It was regrettable that, despite the commendable efforts of the facilitator and of those States of the region that had worked constructively to try to create conditions conducive to a successful conference, it had not been possible to convene a conference within the timeframe envisaged. Ireland understood the genuine frustration in the region that the conference had not yet been held, but urged all sides to stay the course. The process of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be neither quick nor easy. Noting that that all sides should remain open to dialogue and engagement, he said that with courage and political will, progress could be achieved.

261. The ongoing repercussions of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi served a strong reminder of the need for the most robust safety standards. While the establishment of national safety standards and arrangements was primarily the responsibility of the State concerned, nuclear accidents did not respect national borders or territorial limits, and nuclear safety was therefore an important issue in countries that did not have nuclear power plants. Ireland commended the Agency for its ongoing work in the area of nuclear safety since the Fukushima accident, including in the development of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, and in guiding and coordinating efforts to enhance international emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Ireland looked forward to receiving the Agency's comprehensive report in 2014.

262. Ireland commended the Agency's efforts to facilitate and support greater communication in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. Since the previous session of the General Conference, Ireland and other coastal and shipping States had participated in a working group on drafting guidelines in the area of government-to-government communications regarding the maritime transport of radioactive materials. Ireland was grateful to Ambassador Petersen of Norway, who had chaired the working group, and thanked the Permanent Mission of Norway for its logistical support.

263. Turning to the benefits of nuclear sciences and applications, he drew attention to the Agency's excellent work in the important area of radiation medicine. In recognition of the Agency's important contribution to international efforts to support low- and middle-income Member States in the development and implementation of national cancer control programmes, he was pleased to announce that Ireland would be making a voluntary contribution of €125 000 to the PUI, in support of PACT during the current year.

264. The Agency was to be commended for the dedicated and professional manner with which it had pursued its statutory objective for over five decades. All Member States should recommit themselves to supporting the Agency in overcoming the challenges that it faced in promoting and facilitating the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology.

265. Mr KOUBAA (Tunisia) said that his country hoped to consolidate the achievements of the Tunisian people's revolution in the context of the transition to democracy and to combine them with progress in socio-economic development, health, security and other areas. However, the country was facing many complex challenges that must be addressed following careful reflection. It was important to establish national priorities and, in particular, to complete work on the new Constitution as soon as possible despite the many socio-economic difficulties and security issues to be faced during the difficult transitional period.

266. Tunisia attached great importance to the use of nuclear energy and technology in the area of health, especially cancer control, since his country had encountered major difficulties in providing treatment facilities for patients in marginalized regions. His Government remained committed to establishing radiotherapy centres in priority regions. It continued to rely on the Agency's support for the project and was also hoping to receive support from donor countries.

267. Tunisia hoped in the future to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology in a number of economic and social areas. To that end, his country was undertaking a feasibility study on the use of nuclear energy for electricity generation, adopting an integrated approach that took into account various possibilities offered by new and diverse sources of energy. It hoped to take appropriate decisions once the democratic transition had been completed.

268. His country hoped that the Agency would continue to focus on its basic mandate, maintaining the requisite balance among its statutory activities. It was important to be mindful of the risks that the Agency might face, due to its limited material and human resources, in addressing new and diverse challenges in the important areas of safeguards, nuclear safety and security, and technical cooperation.

269. Tunisia greatly appreciated the Agency's continuous funding of national projects under the technical cooperation programme as well as a large number of regional African projects in which his country participated. It hoped that the new projects submitted to the Agency for the 2014–2015 cycle would be granted the necessary support. His country undertook to pay its share of the TCF for the year ahead and to meet all its other obligations.

270. Tunisia attached great importance to the staffing of the Agency's Secretariat and to the fair representation of Member States and the various regions of the world. It called for more vigorous efforts to recruit qualified staff from developing countries.

271. His country attached particular importance to technical cooperation with the AAEA, whose headquarters were in Tunisia, and it welcomed the increased coordination of activities between the Agency and that organization.

272. Tunisia considered that those wishing to benefit from peaceful uses of nuclear energy should comply with a number of obligations relating to safeguards, non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security, implementation of international treaties and application of relevant Agency standards. His country had taken preparatory steps to create the legislative and regulatory framework that would enable it to comply with the obligations ensuing from its additional protocol as soon as possible.

273. His country underscored the importance of using all available means to strengthen the Agency's safeguards regime. It reiterated its call for the establishment a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Middle East with a view to protecting the peoples of the region from the risks posed by such weapons. His country also reaffirmed the need for all Member States to comply with the treaties in force and to accede to all relevant instruments. Tunisia reiterated its unconditional support for the position of the Arab Group and for the Arab draft resolution on the issue.

274. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates) said that the United Arab Emirates had taken significant steps in developing its nuclear power programme and the related infrastructure, following the Agency's guidance and international best practices. The construction of the first nuclear reactor in his country had begun in July 2012 following a detailed evaluation of the design, which had taken into consideration early lessons learned from the Fukushima accident, making his country the first newcomer to build a nuclear power plant in 27 years. Construction of the second unit had begun in May.

275. His country recognized the key role of the Agency in strengthening the global nuclear safety regime. Noting with satisfaction the Director General's efforts in response to the Fukushima accident and towards the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, he said that his country was committed to adopting current and future lessons learned from the Fukushima accident in the design of its reactors.

276. The United Arab Emirates had continued to request and receive comprehensive peer reviews from the Agency, which were essential to ensure the adequacy of safety measures and national infrastructure. His country encouraged Member States to benefit from such services and from evaluation missions.

277. The United Arab Emirates was an active contracting party to the Nuclear Safety Convention review process and was committed to the efforts aimed at strengthening the implementation of that instrument. It called on countries with nuclear facilities that had not yet done so to join and implement the Nuclear Safety Convention as early as possible.

278. Since the United Arab Emirates had embarked on its peaceful nuclear energy programme, the Agency had been an important and vital partner. His country appreciated all the Agency's efforts in supporting its needs, enabling the United Arab Emirates to meet its national goals in various areas of nuclear application and nuclear power, and to share its experience with other Member States.

279. The United Arab Emirates had recently signed an integrated work plan for 2013–2017, which defined a holistic framework of cooperation with all departments of the Agency. His country continued to support the Agency's work by hosting a number of activities and by providing experts and consultants for several committees, working groups and expert missions. The United Arab Emirates also offered fellowships and scientific visits through the Agency's technical cooperation programme.

280. His country appreciated the Director General's visit to the United Arab Emirates in January, which had highlighted mutual interests, as well as the ongoing strong cooperation between the Agency and the United Arab Emirates.

281. The United Arab Emirates recognized the importance of establishing a nuclear liability regime that complied with the relevant major international instruments. In October 2012, his country had issued a law concerning civil liability for nuclear damage, which had been drafted in accordance with the Vienna Convention as amended by the 1997 Protocol, to which the United Arab Emirates had acceded in August 2012. Efforts to harmonize civil liability regimes for nuclear damage should continue, and his country urged States that had not yet done so to join and implement multilateral conventions based on the principles of Vienna Convention. In that regard, his country welcomed the joint statement by France and the United States of America on nuclear liability.

282. The United Arab Emirates strongly endorsed the Agency's role in nuclear security, including in strengthening the international framework and training opportunities. His country had signed an INSSP with the Agency in September the previous year and was planning to request an IPPAS mission in the near future. The United Arab Emirates would host the Agency's International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources in October.

283. The Agency's safeguards system should be capable of providing credible and effective assurances that nuclear material and facilities were being used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The additional protocol gave the safeguards system better tools to provide assurances about both declared and possible undeclared activities or facilities. His country was pleased that 121 countries had brought an additional protocol into force.

284. The United Arab Emirates called on countries to cooperate fully with the Agency with respect to the application of safeguards and to address all outstanding concerns in order to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of their programmes.

285. His country welcomed the Director General's efforts, in consultation with the countries of the Middle East, to facilitate the early implementation of comprehensive safeguards with respect to all nuclear activities in the region. The United Arab Emirates was disappointed by the lack of progress

made towards the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, including the failure to convene a conference on that issue in 2012.

286. In conclusion, he reiterated his country's commitment to working with the Agency to enhance nuclear safety, security and safeguards worldwide, while promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

287. Mr MARAFI (Kuwait) said that socio-economic development necessitated a major increase in energy supplies in the coming decades. Noting that nuclear energy was deemed to be a supplementary rather than an alternative source of energy, he said that any energy choice would be determined by national policies based on needs, aspirations and capacities.

288. Kuwait cooperated actively with the Agency with a view to building its national capacities and the institutions required for the implementation of key projects. It looked forward to further close cooperation to that end. Kuwait was participating in consultations and meetings between experts from Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Agency on the implementation of a joint programme on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He underscored the important achievements of the preceding five years and hoped that further close cooperation would be possible in the future.

289. The technical cooperation programme was a cornerstone of the Agency's work in support of capacity building and the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology to the developing countries. Kuwait had long attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities and greatly appreciated the Agency's activities in support of the Asia and Pacific region, especially the organization of regional workshops and training courses. It looked forward to continued constructive cooperation and was grateful to the Agency staff that had visited Kuwait for their valuable assistance.

290. Kuwait attached great importance to the safety and security of radioactive sources and nuclear material. It was necessary to establish systems and apply rules and guidelines aimed at controlling the movement of such material. Kuwait had followed with interest the developments in the Agency's work concerning nuclear security, in particular the integrated nuclear security support plans. His country had signed the CPPNM and the competent authorities were working on completing the ratification process.

291. Kuwait also attached great importance to the implementation of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran. While Kuwait affirmed the right of all States to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the NPT, it called on Iran to cooperate more closely with the Agency and respond to the latter's queries in order to dispel any fears or doubts regarding the nature of its nuclear programme and address all outstanding issues. It further called on all parties concerned to step up diplomatic efforts to resume the dialogue and negotiations in the interests of peace and stability in the Middle East region and the world as a whole. Kuwait noted with satisfaction the steps that Iran was due to take in cooperation with the Agency to reassure its neighbours in the Gulf about the safety of the Bushehr nuclear power plant by enhancing its safety standards. It welcomed the steps announced by Iran regarding accession to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and hoped that Iran would swiftly take all the necessary action and provide all the clarification requested to enable the Agency to ascertain the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

292. Kuwait attached great importance to the application of Agency safeguards regime to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. It was regrettable that, although all other States in the region had made a commitment to the NPT and all measures, processes and systems related thereto, Israel continued to refuse to sign the NPT and place its installations under the Agency's safeguards regime although it possessed reactors that posed a threat to the region, thereby negatively affecting regional and, therefore, international security and stability. Kuwait called on all Member States to support the

resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which had been tabled owing to the deep disappointment felt by States in the Middle East at the failure to hold the 2012 conference on the creation of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Kuwait encouraged the depository States to help the Agency in realizing the universality of the NPT and freeing the Middle East of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It was important for the Agency not to lose its credibility in that regard.

293. The safeguards system, a cornerstone of the Agency's work and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, enjoyed the support of a majority of States. Kuwait therefore called on all States that had not yet signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency to do so. In addition, it encouraged States that had signed such an agreement but had not yet signed an additional protocol to do so. All States should comply with the NPT and related obligations to dispel any questions or suspicions relating to the nature of their nuclear programme through constructive and transparent negotiation and dialogue.

294. Kuwait had full confidence in the Agency's role and its ability to promote sustainable development in order to address the economic, financial and food crises facing many countries, as well as climate change. The Agency therefore needed States' full support and cooperation to achieve the desired outcomes of safety, security, peace and prosperity for all.

295. Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country, which firmly supported the NPT and the Agency's Statute, remained committed to maintaining international peace and security. Its commitment to nuclear disarmament was enshrined in the preface to the Venezuelan Constitution, as was the prohibition of the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons on Venezuelan territory. Venezuela was among those countries that had undertaken to keep their territories forever free of nuclear weapons pursuant to the Tlatelolco Treaty.

296. His country had made considerable progress over the preceding 14 years in improving the standard of living of its population, including by reducing poverty, eliminating illiteracy, developing the housing and communications infrastructure and promoting social inclusion.

297. Venezuela, which had benefited from Agency technical cooperation projects, some of them implemented within the framework of ARCAL, considered that funding for technical cooperation — one of the Agency's statutory activities — must be sufficient, assured and predictable. It therefore believed that technical cooperation should be funded from the Regular Budget and that the reliance on extrabudgetary funding or footnote-a/ projects should cease.

298. Venezuela continued to attach high priority to closer cooperation among the States of Latin America and the Caribbean, strengthened South-South relations and promoting solidarity among peoples, and considered ARCAL and the Agency as favourable settings for pursuing those goals. To that end, ARCAL should remain free of discrimination and a forum where the Agency's technical objectivity prevailed to ensure that the requirements, plans and problems of each ARCAL State were addressed.

299. His country, which fully supported the Agency's activities under the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, considered that the Agency should continue to play a leading role in the establishment of international codes, standards and norms providing for the highest levels of nuclear safety. Noting that capacity building in nuclear safety should remain a priority for the Agency, he said that Venezuela welcomed the various workshops, courses and seminars in that regard that had been held in 2012, and encouraged the Agency to continue and expand those activities.

300. The accident at Fukushima Daiichi remained a concern for the international community. Venezuela was worried about its environmental consequences but recognized the difficulties

associated with mitigation and remediation. It welcomed the activities undertaken by the Agency and the Government of Japan to learn from the accident.

301. As regards nuclear security, which was a State responsibility, Venezuela considered that the Agency should focus on helping countries that required assistance. It noted the activities implemented in 2012 to strengthen the international legal structure. Venezuela, for its part, was focusing its efforts on developing a home-grown security culture, and he drew attention to the importance of Agency assistance in that regard.

302. With regard to human resources development, a number of workshops had been held in Venezuela over the previous year aimed at identifying possible threats to radioactive or nuclear material in the country, raising awareness of the basic national and Agency guidelines on nuclear security and the possible consequences of a criminal act involving radioactive sources.

303. Regarding the legal and regulatory framework, national efforts to legislate and regulate issues concerning: import and export licences for radioactive sources and equipment generating ionizing radiation, the use of ionizing radiation and the transport of radioactive and nuclear material were at an advanced stage.

304. In the area of prevention, various missions had been undertaken to improve storage conditions and physical protection systems for radiotherapy sources. A project involving Venezuelan State institutions to construct a centralized store for disused sealed radioactive sources was in progress, as were efforts to design an automated system that could initially be used to compile an inventory of radioactive sources in industry and research.

305. A clear distinction must be drawn between nuclear safety and security. Nuclear security-related activities were not mandated by the Statute should therefore be financed through extrabudgetary contributions. Cooperation in that regard should be provided without any conditions attached.

306. Noting that the Agency's verification activities should be based exclusively on technical and objective considerations, free from discriminatory elements that could be used against countries wishing to develop peaceful nuclear programmes, he said that the Agency should consult closely with Member States in finalizing the conceptualization of the State-level safeguards concept.

307. Noting that his country vigorously defended the sovereign right of States to develop nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, he expressed support for the Agency's efforts aimed at addressing the Iranian nuclear issue by diplomatic means, especially given the announcement of the new Iranian Government's intention to step up the negotiations aimed at resolving outstanding differences. He encouraged the international community to support those negotiations.

308. The security situation in Syria had prevented the Agency from routinely carrying out its safeguards implementation activities at the miniature neutron source reactor. There was a very real danger of a military attack that might destroy the nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, which would have serious ramifications for nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation.

309. Given the geopolitical situation in the region to which Iran and Syria belonged, Venezuela urged the Agency to make every effort to bring about a peaceful resolution of the two issues through diplomacy and dialogue.

310. A fundamental aspect of the NPT was the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Noting that the Agency should play an active role in informing Member States about disarmament-related matters, he said that his country would like to see more progress being made towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Like other members of CELAC, Venezuela considered that nuclear-weapon States should take greater

responsibility to reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with the letter and spirit of the NPT and give unequivocal and legally binding guarantees that they would not use or threaten to use such weapons.

311. His country had always supported initiatives aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would be an effective way of bringing peace and stability to the region. Venezuela, like other members of CELAC, therefore regretted that it had not been possible to convene the 2012 international conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

312. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba) congratulated the Director General on his reappointment for a second term.

313. Nuclear security was a matter of common interest, and could not be properly addressed through a selective approach. International standards in that area should be adopted within the framework of the Agency after transparent and inclusive multilateral intergovernmental negotiations. Cuba welcomed the results of the International Conference on Nuclear Security organized by the Agency in July. Such events should be held every three years with a view to following up the agreements reached.

314. While expressing appreciation for the Agency's work on nuclear security, he emphasized that the main responsibility in that regard lay with States. The previous day, Cuba had deposited its instrument of ratification of the amendment to the CPPNM, attesting to the willingness of his Government to continue broadening its cooperation with the Agency and the international community to strengthen nuclear security.

315. He acknowledged the excellent cooperation between his country and the Agency to improve nuclear security at borders and at facilities using category 1 and 2 radiation sources. The implementation of the INSSP provided a good example of such cooperation.

316. As part of its policy of cooperation, Cuba dedicated considerable human and material resources to nuclear security, and contributed, in particular in the Latin American and Caribbean region, to the organization of activities through the provision of radiation protection services and experts.

317. Cuba attached great importance to the sensitive subject of safeguards, and to the impartial and professional actions of the Secretariat in that area. It had repeatedly criticized the manipulation and politicization of safeguards for geopolitical ends, as well as the double standards that some States were regrettably trying to impose. Solving safeguards problems required political will, diplomacy and a genuine readiness to negotiate. The principle of confidentiality in the Agency's safeguards activities should always be strictly observed, and exclusively voluntary decisions should not be turned into obligations.

318. Referring to the section on nuclear verification in the Annual Report for 2012 set out in document GOV/2013/18, he drew attention to the clear difference between decisions of the Security Council, which were binding, and those of the Board, which were not. The Secretariat should draw that distinction in future reports.

319. Cuba supported the efforts to improve the efficiency of safeguards provided that they did not affect the legitimate rights of States or establish discriminatory or selective practices. As the discussions during the Board's session the previous week had shown, the State-level concept was highly complex and had important implications.

320. Open, transparent and planned consultations on the Agency's programme of work should be held in a timely fashion to facilitate the participation of all delegations and achievement of consensus at the General Conference — the most democratic body of the Agency.

321. Cuba had demonstrated by its actions its firm commitment to meet its obligations under the NPT. It was proud to stand among those States in which the Secretariat had found no diversion of declared nuclear material nor any evidence of undeclared nuclear material or activities.

322. Tangible progress needed to be made with regard to nuclear disarmament. Cuba would continue to advocate the immediate commencement of negotiations and the rapid adoption of an international convention on nuclear disarmament. It called upon all Member States to participate in the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, to be held in New York on 26 September.

323. Cuba continued to support fully the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would make a major contribution to peace and stability in the region and beyond, and called upon the international community to intensify its efforts to that end. The failure to hold the conference on that issue could damage the credibility of the system established by the NPT, and Cuba called for the conference to be held without further delay before the end of the current year.

324. Noting the importance of technical cooperation activities for developing countries, like his own, he said that Cuba greatly valued the application of nuclear techniques in such vital areas as public health, agriculture, food, hydrology and environmental conservation. Cuba had achieved an implementation rate of over 85% in its national projects and had sent more than 50 experts to meetings organized by the Agency. His Government remained committed to meeting its obligations and financial commitments with respect to technical cooperation activities, and supported all efforts to strengthen its work and improve efficiency of the Department of Technical Cooperation.

325. His Government attached particular importance to cooperation among developing countries. It supported the ARCAL programme, which was an essential mechanism for promoting cooperation on nuclear matters among countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

326. As a small island developing State, Cuba attached great importance to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas for sustainable development. It noted with interest the theme of the 2013 Scientific Forum, and considered that the outcome of the Forum should contribute to the implementation of paragraphs 158 and 177 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

327. He roundly condemned the unjust and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade, which had been imposed on his country by the Government of the United States of America for more than fifty years and which continued to affect the implementation of Agency technical cooperation activities in Cuba. The blockade made it more difficult to obtain the equipment approved for projects in Cuba, thereby delaying implementation and undermining the achievement of objectives, as well as contravening international law and the Agency's Statute. His country acknowledged the tireless efforts of the Secretariat to find alternatives and solutions. Thanks to its efforts and the determination of his country's institutions, it had been possible to attain high rates of implementation in spite of the difficulties faced.

328. Cuba advocated greater efficiency and effectiveness in the decision-making process at the Agency. The General Conference, as the supreme legislative body in which all Member States participated, should be strengthened. The composition and functions of the Board of Governors should be examined in depth in the context of the analysis of Article VI of the Statute.

329. Mr MARCUZZO DO CANTO (ABACC) said that Argentina and Brazil had managed to establish a safeguards system, which was unique in the world, had matured over a period of more than

20 years and had won the respect of the international nuclear community. The system had features that were not found in other comprehensive safeguards agreements. The Quadripartite Agreement went beyond normal safeguards agreements, which established a commitment between one State Party and the Agency. Instead it had four parties: two neighbouring States, an agency created by those States — ABACC — and the IAEA. Although the ABACC model could not be directly transposed to other regions, it embodied a much more comprehensive safeguards regime that put into practice the concept of neighbours monitoring neighbours, internationally recognized as being both efficient and effective.

330. The latest Agency projections indicated that 90 new reactors would be built by 2030. Argentina and Brazil would have a role to play in such a scenario, which would pose enormous challenges in the fields of safeguards and non-proliferation. One way of facing the challenges of the future would be to promote the establishment and strengthening of independent and reliable regional systems that could be operated in coordination with the Agency, thereby optimizing available resources. ABACC's success in applying safeguards could provide guidance in that regard.

331. Noting that all ABACC safeguards activities were conducted with the agreement of the Agency, with due respect for the independence of the decisions taken by each of the bodies and in line with the terms of the Quadripartite Agreement, he said that in 2012, 120 inspections had been conducted in Brazilian and Argentine nuclear facilities, all of them coordinated by ABACC, the Agency and the nuclear authorities of the two countries. It had been concluded that all nuclear materials and other elements under safeguards in Brazil and Argentina were being used for exclusively peaceful purposes and had been duly accounted for; ABACC had not found any indication of a violation of the commitments undertaken by the two countries.

332. Three-dimensional images obtained with laser rays and environmental samples could make safeguards systems more effective and reduce inspection efforts, and for that reason ABACC had recently signed a technical cooperation agreement with the European Union to design ways of using three-dimensional laser technology and ultrasonic seals for safeguards applications.

333. ABACC's close integration with other international entities in the safeguards fields promoted exchange of experience and knowledge to the benefit of all. To keep up with technological advances, and in its ongoing search for excellence, ABACC had been elaborating institutional policies for the ongoing training of its officials, technicians and inspectors. One crucial factor had been the recognition and support that ABACC had received from the Governments of Argentina and Brazil in the form of a commitment to ensuring that it had the financial resources it needed and that it preserved its institutional independence. Both Governments had also given full support to technical cooperation between ABACC and the laboratories of various national bodies and institutions.

334. In concluding, he emphasized the unique nature of ABACC as a regional safeguards body and reaffirmed its willingness to strengthen cooperation with the Agency within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement.

The meeting rose at 9.40 p.m.