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President: Mr MABHONGO (South Africa)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹	Paragraphs
21 Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East	1–71
22 Israeli nuclear capabilities	72–190

¹ GC(57)/24.

Abbreviations used in this record:

CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
Chemical Weapons Convention	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
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
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

21 Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(57)/10 and Add.1; GC(57)/L.1)

1. The PRESIDENT, introducing the agenda item, pointed out that a draft resolution submitted by Egypt was contained in document GC(57)/L.1.
2. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that his country wished to enhance the work of the Agency in the field of safeguards in keeping with Article III of the NPT.
3. The General Conference and the NPT Review Conferences had accorded high priority to adherence to the NPT of all the countries in the Middle East and to the placing of all nuclear activities in the region under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 had not taken place without the adoption of a special resolution on the Middle East, the international community having realized that the continuing presence in the Middle East of nuclear facilities that were not subject to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime would have an impact on the effectiveness of nuclear non-proliferation efforts and detract from the credibility of the regime as a whole.
4. For several years, Egypt had been submitting a draft resolution under the agenda item "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East" with a view to the international community's supporting the Agency as it played its pivotal role in the efforts to make the Middle East an NWFZ.
5. The text of the draft resolution was identical to that of the resolution adopted by the General Conference at its 2012 regular session, with technical updates; it thereby preserved the delicate balance of that resolution.
6. Averting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East depended primarily on the international community's assuming its responsibilities and dealing with the issue of nuclear proliferation in the region without double standards.
7. The result of a vote on the draft resolution would send a message to the countries of the region about the degree of seriousness of the international community and the credibility of the nuclear-weapon States as regards the principles that they advocated. Egypt hoped that that message would be a positive one, convincing those countries which had acceded to the NPT and accepted full-scope Agency safeguards that their decision to do so had been the right one.
8. Mr NAJAVI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, reiterated its position of principle in the matter as follows:
 - "a. NAM strongly believes that stability cannot be achieved in a region where massive imbalances in military capabilities are maintained, particularly through the possession of nuclear weapons, which allow one party to threaten its neighbours and the region.
 - "b. NAM considers the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East as a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and reiterates its support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.
 - "c. NAM is convinced that the effective and efficient application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East promotes greater confidence among States in the region. Accordingly, NAM

considers that achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East region is the first practical step towards that end, and is a necessary step towards the establishment of an NWFZ there.”

9. NAM welcomed the fact that its members parties to the NPT had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency in fulfilment of their obligation under paragraph 1 of Article III of that treaty, as non-nuclear-weapon States. NAM noted that all States of the Middle East except for Israel were parties to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards.

10. NAM regretted Israel’s continued insistence that the issue of Agency safeguards could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process; there was no automatic sequence linking the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East to the prior conclusion of a peace settlement — in fact, the former would contribute to the latter.

11. NAM also regretted the fact that the Director General had not been able to make further progress in fulfilling his mandate, pursuant to resolution GC(56)/RES/15, regarding the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East.

12. NAM, which believed that all Member States should cooperate in rectifying what was an unacceptable situation, was calling for the active participation of all Member States in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East. In that context, NAM requested that, in the promotion of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, priority should be first accorded to achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards there.

13. NAM, which noted that the Director General would continue consultations in accordance with his mandate regarding the early application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East, welcomed the Director General’s efforts to encourage the development and consideration of relevant new ideas and approaches that might help to move his mandate forward, and it requested the Director General to continue briefing Member States regularly on those efforts.

14. The NAM members parties to the NPT, which recalled the consensus decision contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the convening, in 2012, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, noted that, in response to a request made on 27 April 2012 by the facilitator of that conference, the Secretariat had in October 2012 provided background documentation describing the work undertaken by the Agency and the experience gained by it with regard to modalities for establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. NAM, which would have greatly appreciated the Director General’s briefing Member States on that matter earlier, had during the September 2013 session of the Board requested that the background documentation, or a detailed summary thereof, be attached to the Director General’s report contained in document GC(57)/10. NAM welcomed the fact that the Director General had now provided the background documentation, in an annex to document GC(57)/10/Add.1; it would duly reflect on that documentation.

15. The NAM members parties to the NPT were profoundly disappointed that the aforementioned conference to be convened in 2012 had still not taken place. They were of the view that the failure to convene the conference in 2012 had been contrary to the letter and spirit of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and violated the collective agreement of the States parties to the NPT contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Conference. They strongly rejected the conveners’ allegations regarding impediments to the convening of the conference on schedule. They urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation to convene the conference without any further delay, in order to avoid a negative impact on the credibility of the NPT, on the

preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

16. NAM requested the Director General to continue his consultations with Member States on arrangements conducive to achievement of the objective of the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

17. NAM, which was fully committed to cooperating with the Director General and supporting his efforts in implementing resolution GC(56)/RES/15, endorsed the draft resolution submitted by Egypt.

18. Mr SEOKOLO (South Africa) said that his country was of the firm conviction that NWFZs played an important role in preventing the proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, of nuclear weapons.

19. His country was also of the firm conviction that the establishment of NWFZs on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the regions in question enhanced regional and global peace and security, strengthened the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributed to attainment of the objective of nuclear disarmament.

20. The Pelindaba Treaty stated that the establishment of other NWFZs, especially in the Middle East, would also enhance the security of the African region. South Africa therefore continued to call for the establishment of an NWFZ — in fact, of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction — in the Middle East.

21. With a view to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, the General Conference had rightly affirmed “the urgent need for all States in the Middle East to forthwith accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region.” His country urged all parties directly concerned to take practical steps in that regard.

22. South Africa advocated full implementation of the NPT and its universal application in pursuit of the ultimate goal of a world entirely free of nuclear weapons. It therefore believed that the international community should redouble its efforts to achieve universal adherence to the NPT, strengthen the multilateral institutions responsible for addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and be vigilant vis-à-vis all actions that might undermine its determination to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

23. South Africa had therefore been encouraged by the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference aimed at the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference. It had noted with appreciation the work done by the facilitator of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction that was to have been convened during 2012, but it was deeply concerned about the fact that the conference had still not been convened. The 1995 resolution on the Middle East had been part of the package of decisions that had enabled the NPT to be extended indefinitely, and South Africa would therefore like to see an intensification of efforts aimed at the convening of the conference, with the participation of all States of the region, at the earliest possible date.

24. The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction was, in the words of the facilitator, a “hugely ambitious endeavour”; it would require inclusive preparations aimed at a comprehensive approach to all the relevant security concerns of the States of the region. However, it was an endeavour well worth persisting in.

25. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that building confidence among the States of the Middle East required, as a first step, the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the region. However, the successive governments of the Zionist entity, Israel, had lacked the political will to cooperate with the international community, and that was the sole obstacle to the establishment of such a zone there.

26. Syria had long been endeavouring to promote serious action aimed at the establishment of such a zone in the region. In 2003, acting on behalf of the Arab Group, it had submitted a draft resolution on the subject to the Security Council. Unfortunately, certain influential States had not merely opposed the resolution but were continuing to support Israel materially, scientifically and militarily.

27. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had provided for the convening in 2012 of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and had mandated the NPT depositary States to make the necessary arrangements. However, Israel continued to challenge the international community by refusing to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards, and its position was supported by its allies, who were continuing to defend its immunity from international accountability.

28. His country greatly regretted the failure in 2012 to convene a conference that might have laid firm foundations for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Also, it condemned the announcement by one of the Member States involved in organizing the conference of its postponement and queried the source of its legal authority to make such an announcement. The grounds invoked by it for the postponement of the conference were unacceptable. Clearly, the real ground for the postponement had been lack of political will on the part of Israel to renounce its nuclear capabilities.

29. The international community should pressure Israel into acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards.

30. Mr DANIELI (Israel) said that a draft resolution on the “Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East” had been before the General Conference each year for several years, but in recent years the draft resolution had regrettably been a manifestation of its sponsor’s departure from the tradition of consensus.

31. Israel attached great importance to the NPT regime and endorsed its goals. However, the geopolitical situation in the Middle East clearly demonstrated that the NPT regime could not provide an answer to the unique security challenges of a region where States parties to the NPT were violating it. Calls for universal adherence to the NPT needed to be judged in the light of those challenges.

32. Part of the preamble to the NPT read as follows: “Recalling that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, ...”. In the Middle East, regrettably, the threat of force was a popular theme among those bent on inflicting harm and creating instability.

33. Israel had consistently pursued a responsible policy in the nuclear domain, reflecting its position as regards regional security in all its aspects, including the establishment in the greater Middle East region of an effectively verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. However, a comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and full compliance by all States of the region with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations were essential prerequisites for the establishment of such a zone there.

34. The lesson learned from other regions was that the establishment of a framework for regional security presupposed a collective political desire of the regional parties to reassure one another that exclusively peaceful means would be resorted to in order to resolve their conflicts. No resolution imposed from outside was an adequate substitute for such a collective political desire.

35. Israel believed that the path leading to a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East should begin with the building of trust among the States of the region through direct engagement. Unfortunately, the idea of direct engagement was unacceptable to the Arab Member States of the Agency. Without direct engagement, it would be impossible to initiate a gradual transition from confrontation to cooperation and build consensus on the necessary measures involving wider regional peace and security interests.

36. Israel had reacted positively to the proposals made earlier in the year by Mr Laajava, facilitator of the envisaged conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, regarding multilateral consultations, but the Arab Member States of the Agency had rejected them, disguising their refusal to engage directly with Israel by advance insistence on certain outcomes as preconditions for their participating in the consultations.

37. Whereas Israel was demonstrating a commitment to the process of confidence-building in the Middle East, its Arab neighbours were demonstrating a commitment to harassing Israel — *inter alia* by the tabling of divisive draft resolutions in which Israel was singled out for criticism and no reference was made to the non-compliance of several States parties to the NPT with its provisions.

38. It was already some years since the sponsor of the draft resolution now before the General Conference had, regrettably, deviated from the path of consensus, mainly in order to avoid a dialogue with Israel, which could not associate itself with the call — in operative paragraph 2 — on all States in the Middle East to accede to the NPT.

39. Israel requested that separate votes be taken on operative paragraph 2 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

40. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba) said that his country, which was very concerned about the lack of progress as regards implementation of the General Conference's resolutions on the "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", believed that the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would be a major contribution to regional and worldwide peace and stability and a major step towards global nuclear disarmament.

41. Accordingly, Cuba considered it essential that Israel accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

42. Recently, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, of which Cuba was currently exercising the temporary presidency, had adopted a declaration regretting the failure to hold, in 2012, a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction pursuant to decisions taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Cuba would like to see the envisaged conference convened soon.

43. Meanwhile, Cuba hoped that the draft resolution now before the General Conference would be adopted — and fully implemented.

44. Mr ESTRADA ROMAN (Nicaragua) said that his country wished to make its contribution to ending the arms race, to the elimination of nuclear weapons, and to the achievement of a world living in peace based on the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect, solidarity, good will and economic and social fairness.

45. On 22 August, Nicaragua had been one of the 33 States members of OPANAL whose representatives had met in Buenos Aires to address issues such as: obtaining full negative security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States for all the States parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty; and making an effective contribution to general and complete nuclear disarmament by promoting negotiations on and the adoption of a legally binding universal document banning nuclear weapons.

46. Accordingly, his country regretted the failure to hold in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction — a conference called for in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Such a conference should be convened as soon as possible, with the participation of all parties concerned.

47. Mr NAJAFI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the current year marked the fortieth anniversary of the 1974 Iranian initiative relating to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. The resolutions on that subject which had been repeatedly adopted without a vote by the General Assembly since 1980 reflected the importance of the issue in the volatile region of the Middle East.

48. By acceding to the NPT and placing its peaceful nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, Iran had demonstrated its determination to help bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In August 2012, in his historic speech at the 16th NAM Summit, held in Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader had stated that "nuclear weapons neither ensure security, nor do they consolidate political power; rather they are a threat to both security and political power.... We proposed the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and we are committed to it." Having ratified all major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, Iran was determined to comply with its international commitments.

49. Universal adherence to the NPT would effectively ensure the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. Iran's unswerving support for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, with the ultimate objective of bringing about a world free of nuclear weapons, was indisputable.

50. It was regrettable that, in spite of decades-long global efforts, no progress had been made towards establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East, owing to the refusal of Israel to accede to the NPT and subject its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to the Agency's verification system. Given Israel's intransigence, it was very doubtful whether such a zone could be established in the near future.

51. Despite the wish of the international community, reflected in the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and in related resolutions of the General Assembly, the Agency's General Conference and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Israel, confident of the political and military support of certain permanent members of the Security Council, had neither acceded to the NPT nor placed its secret nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards.

52. As stated in the Director General's latest report on the "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", "All States of the Middle East region except for Israel are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and have undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards." It was a matter for regret that the Israeli regime, supported by its allies, was continuing with its illegal nuclear programme without any Agency verification and had not even declared its intention to accede to the NPT. Its prohibited nuclear activities seriously threatened regional peace and security and endangered the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

53. The inaction imposed on the Security Council over the past several decades as regards addressing the issue of the well-documented nuclear weapons programme of Israel had emboldened the Israeli regime to explicitly acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons — an act that had been condemned by the Non-Aligned Movement.

54. The unilateral decision of one of the conveners to postpone, for fictitious reasons, the conference — planned for 2012 — on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had been aimed at protecting Israel from international condemnation. It had run counter to a unanimous decision taken by the 2010 NPT Review Conference and had undermined the credibility of the NPT and the preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The conveners of the aforementioned conference should honour their commitments and convene the conference soon, without any preconditions.

55. Mr CHENG Jingye (China) said that establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would help to promote regional and international peace and stability. China would therefore like to see an international conference on the establishment of such a zone convened as soon as possible. It commended all parties involved in the effort to bring about the convening of such a conference, especially the conference facilitator, Mr Laajava.

56. The PRESIDENT recalled that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution contained in document GC(57)/L.1.

57. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt) requested that the vote be taken by roll-call.

58. Uzbekistan, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

59. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Canada, Israel.

Abstaining: Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Madagascar, Mongolia, Swaziland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America.

60. There were 112 votes in favour and 2 against, with 11 abstentions. Operative paragraph 2 was adopted.

61. Mr SWAMINATHAN (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had abstained because it believed that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution introduced matters extraneous to the Agency.

62. The PRESIDENT recalled that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on the whole of the draft resolution contained in document GC(57)/L.1.

63. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt) requested that the vote be taken by roll-call.

64. Japan, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

65. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Angola, Botswana, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Israel, Jamaica, Madagascar, Mongolia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America.

66. There were 114 votes in favour and none against, with 11 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

67. Mr HUSHEK (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country was continuing to work for NPT universality and a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. However, the manner in which the issues relating to those goals had been raised in the General Conference undermined the prospects for constructive dialogue among the regional parties.

68. The United States, which had abstained in the vote, hoped that the General Conference would return to consensus in future years, so that those issues might be addressed in a constructive manner.

69. Mr BARRETT (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country, which was continuing to call on all States that had not already concluded with the Agency a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol to conclude both and bring them into force promptly, had consistently expressed itself in support of the establishment of a verifiable NWFZ in the Middle East.

70. Some years previously, the draft resolutions on the "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East" had commanded a consensus, and Canada was disappointed that, in recent years, language had been introduced into them that had resulted in the collapse of that consensus. The draft

resolution submitted in document GC(57)/L.1 unduly and unhelpfully politicized a forum which had historically taken a more technical perspective on the issues involved.

71. Canada was also disappointed that the draft resolution did not address the serious issues of non-compliance in the Middle East, thus ignoring a critical aspect of the application of Agency safeguards there. Accordingly, Canada had abstained in the vote.

22. Israeli Nuclear Capabilities

(GC(57)/1/Add.1; GC(57)/18; GC(57)/L.2)

72. Mr AL HINAI (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that all Arab States — without exception — supported nuclear non-proliferation, had acceded to the NPT and had taken steps with a view to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Israel, on the other hand, still refused to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. As a result, peace and security in the region remained elusive, and escalating tensions heightened the risk of an arms race that would have dire consequences.

73. Neutral reports had confirmed that Israel possessed a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. That could not be ignored by the Arab States or by the international community.

74. Israel's attempts to further enhance its nuclear capabilities, taking advantage of its immunity from genuine international pressure, were unacceptable. The Arab Group condemned the fact that some States resorted to all possible means in order to prevent light from being shed on Israel's nuclear capabilities, opposing the adoption of resolutions that mentioned Israel by name while levelling haphazard allegations against other States.

75. The goal of the Agency's Arab Member States in continually raising the present issue in the General Conference was not solely to focus attention on a dangerous situation, but also to promote the adoption of a comprehensive approach that addressed the security of all peoples of the Middle East instead of dealing with each State individually in a biased and selective manner based on double standards.

76. The most recent resolution adopted by the General Conference on "Israeli nuclear capabilities" was resolution GC(53)/RES/17, in which the General Conference had in 2009 called upon Israel "to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards". Other resolutions on the subject had been adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council and by the NPT Review Conferences, including the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the 2010 NPT Review Conference; in them, Israel had been called upon to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards as an essential step towards the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Those resolutions demonstrated conclusively that the international community was aware of the risk to the region posed by unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear activities and facilities.

77. The Arab Group considered that the General Conference agenda item now under consideration was no less important than any other agenda item, given its direct link to the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East. It was therefore surprised that, whenever it proposed the inclusion of an item entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities" in the General Conference's agenda, some parties expressed opposition on the grounds that the technical mandate of the Agency prevented it from addressing political issues.

78. Israel's unacceptable nuclear practices had long been a matter of concern within the Agency and the United Nations, as demonstrated by the long list of resolutions included in the explanatory memorandum that the Arab Group had submitted when requesting the inclusion of the item "Israeli nuclear capabilities" in the agenda for the General Conference's current session (GC(57)/1/Add.1). Their request had been less a matter of Arab States singling out Israel than of Israel singling itself out by — in contrast to the Arab States — failing to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

79. The Arab Group regretted the fact that several influential States, including some nuclear-weapon States, which consistently declared their support for the principle of universality of the NPT invariably departed from that principle when Israel was involved. Their attitude impeded the implementation of General Conference resolutions on "Israeli nuclear capabilities" and confirmed the application of double standards in that context.

80. Israel had repeatedly refused to cooperate with the Agency in implementing General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 and other relevant resolutions, as demonstrated by: the message dated 26 July 2010 from Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Director General; the statement made by the delegate of Israel immediately after the adoption of the aforementioned resolution by the General Conference, to the effect that Israel would not cooperate in any way in the implementation of the resolution; and the statement made by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu after the 2010 NPT Review Conference, in which he had rejected the Review Conference's resolution relating to the Middle East.

81. Israel downplayed the importance of the NPT, claiming that it was ineffective in the Middle East because some States parties to it in the region had not complied with its provisions. That was a false claim; insofar as the NPT was ineffective in the Middle East, that was due to Israel's non-accession to it.

82. Israel's aggressive policies and practices vis-à-vis the Arab States reinforced concerns regarding the Israeli nuclear threat to peace and security in the Middle East. It was odd that, while Israel consistently argued that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East depended primarily on the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the region, it concurrently did everything in its power to undermine peace efforts and to defeat any initiative aimed at the establishment of such a zone, refusing to implement Security Council and other resolutions calling on it to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

83. The Arab Group considered that the implementation by Israel of the resolution on "Israeli nuclear capabilities" adopted by the General Conference in 2009 and of similar resolutions would enhance the effectiveness of the NPT in the Middle East and improve the prospects for success of any initiative concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

84. The Arab Group, which had supported the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the holding in 2012, in Helsinki, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, was disappointed with the action taken to date in response to that decision. In particular, it was dismayed at the failure of the organizers to convene the conference in 2012 and at the imposition by some of the organizers of irrelevant conditions and the unacceptable pretexts they had invoked in postponing the conference. The current tensions in the Middle East were not a justifiable reason for postponing the conference but rather a reason for convening it in a timely manner with a view to promoting stability there.

85. With regard to the proposal of the conference facilitator regarding multilateral consultations in Geneva among all States of the region, the Arab States had agreed to participate if: a precise date had been set for the conference; the consultations were conducted under the auspices of the United

Nations, in accordance with a clear agenda; and only those States which had officially announced their participation in the conference attended. The Arab States were not laying down preconditions but specifying criteria for the success of the consultations. Similarly, they had refrained from the submission of a draft resolution on “Israeli nuclear capabilities” to the General Conference in 2011 and 2012 so that it could not be invoked as an excuse for postponing the envisaged Helsinki conference.

86. The Arab States regretted the lack of progress in implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference at the session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in Geneva from 22 April to 3 May 2013, and they urged the organizers of the Helsinki conference to assume their responsibilities in that regard. The failure of international efforts to convene the Helsinki conference would adversely affect the credibility of the NPT, the NPT review process and the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole.

87. In light of the foregoing, the Arab Group had decided, at the level of the Council of the League of Arab States, to submit a draft resolution on “Israeli nuclear capabilities” at the General Conference’s current session. Adoption of the draft resolution would not impede international efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. On the contrary, it would probably revive the efforts to create such a zone, as had the adoption of similar resolutions during the period 1987–1991.

88. Mr NAJAVI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that it strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region where a massive imbalance in military capabilities was continuing to exist, particularly owing to the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons was enabling one country to threaten its neighbours and other countries in the region.

89. NAM welcomed the fact that its members party to the NPT had all concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency as non-nuclear-weapon States in fulfilment of their obligations under Article III.1 of the NPT.

90. NAM considered that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be a positive step towards the objective of global nuclear disarmament, and it continued to advocate the establishment of such a zone in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

91. A selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East was undermining the viability of the Agency’s safeguards regime. Also, it had resulted in the continuing dangerous presence there of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, despite the repeated calls on Israel to subject those facilities and activities to comprehensive Agency safeguards.

92. NAM was gravely concerned about the dire consequences for international security of Israel’s nuclear capabilities, which posed a serious threat to Israel’s neighbours and to other States, and about the continuing provision to Israeli scientists of access to the nuclear facilities of one of the nuclear-weapon States.

93. Member States should cooperate in rectifying what was an unacceptable situation and achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East. Implementing resolution GC(53)/RES/17 could be a first step.

94. NAM regretted Israel’s continuing insistence that the issue of Agency safeguards in the Middle East could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process. There was no automatic sequence making the application of comprehensive safeguards at all nuclear facilities in the Middle East dependent on a Middle East peace settlement. The former would contribute to the latter.

95. NAM continued to want a complete ban on the transfer to Israel of nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, devices and other resources and on the provision to Israel of other assistance in nuclear-related scientific and technological fields.

96. In a letter attached to the Director General's report contained in document GC(54)/14, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs had stated that Israel valued the non-proliferation regime, acknowledged its importance and had over the years demonstrated "a responsible policy of restraint in the nuclear domain". Regrettably, numerous Agency documents were testimony to the contrary. For example, in various resolutions regarding South Africa's nuclear capabilities adopted by it before 1994, the General Conference had recalled General Assembly resolutions dealing with relations between Israel and South Africa in which the General Assembly had, inter alia, strongly condemned the extensive collaboration between Israel and the then racist regime of South Africa, especially in the military and nuclear fields, in defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

97. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) said that Israel was the only State in the Middle East that had not acceded to the NPT and placed all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. It was also the only State in the Middle East that possessed a huge nuclear arsenal and diverse modern delivery systems. Furthermore, Israel was the only State in the Middle East that displayed no real desire to engage in negotiations concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

98. The international community had been aware of concerns regarding the Israeli military nuclear programme since the 1980s, as evidenced by the large number of resolutions adopted in numerous international forums, particularly the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Agency's General Conference and the NPT Review Conferences.

99. During the 1980s and 1990s, the General Conference had adopted resolutions entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat" that contained strong language directed against Israel: In them, the General Conference had invariably condemned the continued refusal of Israel to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the Agency's safeguards, as required by Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

100. Hence, the Israeli claim that the Arab Group was now raising the issue of "Israeli nuclear capabilities" in order to divert attention from issues relating to the application of safeguards in other States in the Middle East was clearly unfounded; Israel's nuclear capabilities had been a source of growing international concern for decades.

101. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons represented such a serious threat that the need to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East had been recognized in a resolution adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference. That resolution, one of a series of resolutions that had led to the indefinite extension of the NPT, was a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had confirmed the fact that the resolution had lost none of its relevance and that the credibility of the entire nuclear non-proliferation regime depended on its implementation.

102. His country was therefore surprised at the persistence with which some Member States denied that fact, and at their opposition to the Arab Group whenever it exercised its right to raise an issue that was of vital importance to the peoples of the Arab States. Those Member States had ignored the flexibility that the Arab Group had displayed during the past two General Conference sessions in order to assist the facilitator of the envisaged conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They had failed to reciprocate, interpreting the positive stance of the Arab Group as a fear of failure.

103. It was essential that the General Conference adopt the draft resolution now before it on “Israel nuclear capabilities” since the situation in the Middle East had become even more complex and dangerous since 2009. Israel was continuing to pursue a policy of nuclear opacity that was a matter of great concern to its neighbours, since no restraints were imposed on its conduct. Moreover, Israel had become more aggressive; not a month passed without the Israeli leaders unleashing a wave of threats against one country or another. Hence, the need for positive initiatives that would ease tensions and enhance the prospects for peace in the Middle East was greater than ever before. The envisaged Helsinki conference was to have been such an initiative, and its postponement by those who were supposed to ensure its success had come as a great shock and could undermine the entire nuclear non-proliferation regime.

104. The General Conference should vote in favour of the draft resolution now under consideration, which shed light on the risks faced by everyone, including the people of Israel, and thereby help to pressure Israel into complying with international law, especially nuclear and humanitarian law, and with the international norms of justice.

105. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the adoption by the General Conference of resolution GC(53)/RES/17 in 2009 had sent a clear message from the international community to Israel, whose nuclear capabilities were not subject to any international control and posed a threat to peace and security in the Middle East and the world as a whole.

106. However, that resolution and many resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly had failed to deter Israel from expanding its nuclear arsenal in breach of international law. Israel had ignored them completely, relying on the robust support of its allies, and it remained unwilling to cooperate with the international community.

107. Regrettably, several influential Member States, including some nuclear-weapon States, applied double standards when it came to promoting the universality of the NPT. They ignored the universality principle in the case of Israel and were even helping Israel to expand its nuclear arsenal, thereby violating their obligations under the NPT.

108. Israel — with its horrific record of occupation, oppression and murder and its policies of displacement, isolation and blockade directed against the Arab peoples of the Middle East — was endeavouring to divert the attention of the international community from its nuclear capabilities to the internal politics of Arab States. Such obfuscation might work for a while, but not in the long run. The international community had a duty to put an end to the threat posed by Israel not only to the security and stability of the Middle East, but also to the credibility of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

109. The achievement of peace, security and stability in the Middle East required the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone there. The international community should therefore stop applying double standards and pressure Israel into acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, placing all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards and eliminating its entire arsenal of nuclear weapons.

110. Mr AL HUSSEINI (Jordan) said that his country, which attached great importance to the Agency’s comprehensive safeguards system as a means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, considered it essential that Israel accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, thereby facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Such action would help to promote peace and security in the region and encourage the countries there to focus on economic and social development instead of engaging in an arms race.

111. Jordan therefore welcomed all initiatives aimed at facilitating the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and it hoped that the General Conference would adopt the draft resolution now under consideration.

112. Mr DANIELI (Israel) said that for decades the regional parties in the Middle East had been unable to make progress as regards confidence-building and collective security because of the region's chronic instability, the vastly different political regimes in the region and different approaches to conflict resolution, arms control and regional security.

113. In his country's view, the security deficit in the Middle East and the threat to Israel were rooted in an inauspicious political environment — namely, a lack of peaceful relations and endemic hostility. Only an improvement in the behaviour of certain States and in inter-State relations could create a basis for an ambitious regional arms control agenda.

114. That view appeared to be shared by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the co-conveners of the envisaged Helsinki conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. At the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, they had stated that such a zone could be established only on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the Middle East; it could not be imposed from outside. Also, they had expressed the view that preparatory consultations could help greatly in bringing about agreement on the modalities for the Helsinki conference and that direct engagement between the States of the Middle East was necessary.

115. However, such direct engagement was rejected by the Arab States, which were trying to impose a one-sided agenda for the Helsinki conference. They were speaking as if the only issue that should be considered at the Helsinki conference was Israel's nuclear capabilities, with no thought given to the chemical weapons that had been used by Syria and to the remaining open questions as regards the nuclear programme of Syria — a nominal party to the NPT — or to the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran — a further nominal party to the NPT.

116. Invoking once again the issue of "Israeli nuclear capabilities" while ignoring, on one hand, the negative developments taking place in the Middle East and, on the other, the need to build a consensus as regards the Helsinki conference was a clear manifestation of the Arab States' single-minded agenda aimed at isolating Israel.

117. Without direct engagement between Arab States and Israel on regional security matters, it would be impossible to initiate a gradual transition from confrontation to cooperation and build consensus on necessary measures involving wider regional peace and security interests.

118. The Arab States had said "no" to the proposal regarding multilateral consultations made by Mr Laajava, the facilitator of the Helsinki conference. Israel, on the other hand, believed that such consultations could provide an opportunity for a constructive exchange of views on all relevant issues and that their success would be a strong signal that the regional parties in the Middle East were capable of working together towards the shared objective of a Middle East without conflicts and weapons of mass destruction.

119. Israel, which was concerned about the present sombre realities in the Middle East, stood ready to engage constructively with like-minded regional parties in endeavouring to create a better environment — with security for all — in the region. However, trust could not be built overnight — and certainly not through one-sided measures.

120. Despite the present differences, there could be a broad strategic convergence between Israel and its Arab neighbours through a reframing of the discourse on regional security and its parameters, but not if “Israel bashing” continued under the heading “Israeli nuclear capabilities”.

121. The agenda item with that title was simply politicizing the General Conference and diverting attention from many important issues. His country therefore called upon other Member States to vote against the draft resolution contained in document GC(57)/L.2 and thereby send to its sponsors the clear message that they should stop trying to ostracize Israel.

122. Israel requested that the draft resolution be voted on by roll-call.

123. Mr NAJAVI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that Israel’s nuclear capabilities had long been a source of serious concern to the international community. In August 2012, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement had at their 16th Summit, held in Tehran, expressed concern over Israel’s nuclear capabilities and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear weapons.

124. Also, since 1982 the General Conference had in several resolutions called upon Israel to promptly accede to the NPT and put all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

125. Furthermore, the 2010 NPT Review Conference had recalled the reaffirmation by the 2000 NPT Review Conference of the importance of Israel’s accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

126. However, ignoring the legitimate serious concern of the international community, Israel was continuing to increase its nuclear capabilities with the assistance of certain other States, in flagrant contravention of all international norms. It was thereby not only jeopardizing regional and global security but also seriously undermining the Agency’s verification mechanism.

127. The Islamic Republic of Iran was particularly concerned about the fact that Israeli scientists were being generously granted access to the nuclear facilities of certain nuclear-weapon States while nuclear scientists of States parties to the NPT were being assassinated.

128. Since its illegal creation following its occupation of Palestine, with the massacre and uprooting of thousands of innocent Palestinians, Israel had attacked and threatened to attack its neighbours, had engaged in cyber warfare and State terrorism, and had assassinated nuclear scientists of other countries. Nuclear weapons in the hands of such an irresponsible country undoubtedly constituted a threat to peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

129. Regrettably, the decades-long inaction imposed on the international community by certain States as regards addressing the issue of Israel’s well-documented nuclear weapons programme had emboldened the Israeli regime to explicitly acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons — an act that had been condemned by the Non-Aligned Movement.

130. His country therefore considered it reasonable that the issue of “Israeli nuclear capabilities” should remain on the General Conference’s agenda and that the Director General should be requested to make recommendations regarding the application of comprehensive safeguards to Israel’s nuclear facilities.

131. To allow Israel, a non-party to the NPT that had attacked and threatened to attack peaceful nuclear facilities in clear violation of resolution GC(XXXIV)/RES/533, to divert the attention of Member States from its clandestine nuclear weapons programme would undermine the credibility of the NPT.

132. In his country's view, the draft resolution submitted by the Arab Member States of the Agency was timely, and a vote on it would reveal the true face of many Member States that claimed that they were against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and supporters of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

133. The PRESIDENT invited the Conference to proceed to a roll-call vote on the draft resolution contained in document GC(57)/L.2, as requested by the representative of Israel.

134. Panama, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

135. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Abstaining: Angola, Argentina, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Holy See, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay.

136. There were 43 votes in favour and 51 against, with 32 abstentions. The draft resolution was rejected.

137. Mr MACMANUS (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said it was regrettable that a draft resolution on "Israeli nuclear capabilities" had again been submitted to the General Conference. The issue had no place within the Agency, and there had been no winners in the vote that had just taken place.

138. The United States would continue working hard to start a constructive dialogue on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and it hoped that all the States concerned would participate in that dialogue on the basis of mutual respect.

139. Ms LE JEUNE D'ALLEGEERSHECQUE (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the draft resolution, which singled out and stigmatized one State, was divisive and its adoption would have damaged the prospects for the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

140. Her country, which would like to see Member States focusing on paving the way for the convening of such a conference, had made clear its regret at the fact that such a conference had not yet been convened.

141. Although the delay in convening it had generated understandable frustration, all parties concerned had expressed their willingness to continue discussions on how to make progress towards the shared objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

142. The United Kingdom, which had been supporting the conference facilitator's efforts to organize multilateral consultations on the agenda and modalities of the conference, regretted the fact that the Arab League had not yet agreed to participate in such consultations. The conference could hardly be successful unless all States of the Middle East were involved in agreeing on its purpose. The efforts to build trust among the regional parties should therefore continue.

143. For its part, the United Kingdom remained fully committed to its role as co-convenor of the conference and to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and it continued to hope that the conference would be convened soon.

144. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country was deeply concerned about Israel's nuclear capabilities as they had grave negative implications for regional and international peace and security. Israel was, through its nuclear activities, violating the Statute. It was the only country in the Middle East not a party to the NPT, and it had not expressed any intention of becoming one.

145. Israel should, without further delay, accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Such action would be conducive to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and to the achievement of peace in that region.

146. In Cuba's view, the transfer to Israel of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, devices and resources should be stopped, along with the provision of other scientific and technological assistance of use in the nuclear field.

147. Real political will was necessary if the Middle East was to become a region of peace and security, and there would have to be an end to the application of double standards by those who accused some States in the region of non-compliance with safeguards obligations while continuing to provide Israel with assistance in the nuclear field and preventing the adoption of resolutions calling for Israel's accession to the NPT. The United States of America and its allies should adopt a consistent position and, having called for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in other countries of the Middle East, should drop their permissive stance towards Israel and call for the controlled destruction, under international supervision, of all its nuclear weapons.

148. Mr RAUDONIKIS (Lithuania), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union, said that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Moldova and Georgia associated themselves with the statement he was about to make.

149. The European Union's position regarding the draft resolution just rejected by the General Conference was consistent and well known, and it had recently been articulated by its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Catherine Ashton, in a letter to the League of Arab States.

150. The European Union regretted the postponement of the envisaged conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. However, it was pleased that all parties concerned had expressed their willingness to continue discussions on how to make progress towards the shared objective of the establishment of

such a zone. It remained fully committed to that objective and hoped that the envisaged conference would be convened soon. It commended the tireless efforts of the conference facilitator in making preparations for a successful conference attended by all States of the Middle East.

151. Adoption of the draft resolution on “Israeli nuclear capabilities”, which stigmatized one State of the Middle East, would have had a negative impact on the sensitive process of bringing about the convening of the conference, including the essential preparatory consultations. Nevertheless, it regretted the fact that the draft resolution had been taken to a vote. It continued to believe that a consensual approach was the best way to make progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

152. The European Union, which had consistently called for universal adherence to international legal instruments such as the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, would like to see all States parties to the NPT complying fully with its provisions and with all relevant Security Council, General Conference and Board resolutions. In addition, it would like to see all States of the Middle East implementing comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols as a crucial contribution to the improvement of the security situation in the region.

153. Mr NGUYEN Thiep (Viet Nam), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country would like to see universal adherence to the NPT.

154. In his country’s view, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones was conducive to the achievement of the goals of the NPT, and Viet Nam therefore welcomed the efforts being made — inter alia through direct talks — to bring about the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as envisaged in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

155. Mr ŽUGIĆ (Serbia), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country, which remained committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, had abstained because it considered that the draft resolution in question touched upon delicate issues of internal and international political significance.

156. Serbia would continue to support the current peace efforts in the Middle East and hoped that they would lead to a just and lasting agreement implemented by all parties concerned.

157. Monsignor ANTOLOVIC (Holy See), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the Holy See had always favoured the building of a climate of trust in the Middle East and had supported every initiative aimed at solving problems in the region peacefully, offering its own specific contribution.

158. In its view, in order to arrive at a sustainable solution it was necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach to the problems that characterized the Middle East, including those in the nuclear field, and not focus on single issues. Also, it was important to be aware of the suffering of all peoples in the region and to take account of their equal dignity, their aspirations and their legitimate interests.

159. Ms CHAIMONGKOL (Thailand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country, which had abstained as it had done on a similar occasion in 2010, continued to feel strongly that there was a need for a constructive atmosphere that would facilitate the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as called for in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

160. Her country, which was very much in favour of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, was disappointed that the convening of such a conference had been postponed and no date for

convening it had been set, but it hoped that a resumption of consultations would lead to the desired result.

161. Mr ULYANOV (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it had repeatedly supported calls for universalization of the NPT and it would have been strange if it had taken a different position within the Agency.

162. In 2011 and 2012, the Arab Member States of the Agency had refrained from submitting a draft resolution on “Israeli nuclear capabilities” so as not to jeopardize the preparations for a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Russia had welcomed the constructive attitude of those States at the time.

163. In 2013, however, they had taken a different position because the envisaged conference had been postponed and no date had yet been set for it. Russia understood their motives for submitting the draft resolution just voted on, but, as a co-convenor of the conference, it would have preferred a less confrontational position. During the current session of the General Conference, Russia had held consultations with Arab Member States of the Agency and with Israel, but it had not been possible to arrive at an outcome acceptable to all. However, the constructive dialogue that had taken place might have been successful had there been more time, so there was cause for optimism.

164. In that connection, the recent welcome decision of the Syrian Government to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and hand over Syria’s chemical weapons would go some way to ridding the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and be conducive to the successful holding of the envisaged conference.

165. Efforts should now be made to set a date for the conference and determine the agenda and modalities as soon as possible. Russia hoped that the holding of preparatory consultations in that regard in Geneva would be useful. As a co-convenor, it would do all it could to ensure that the conference was held soon.

166. Mr OZAWA (Japan), speaking in explanation of vote, said that for many years his country had been urging all States not party to the NPT, including Israel, to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States and to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols with the Agency. It had therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution entitled “Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East”, in which the General Conference called upon all States in the region to accede to the NPT.

167. The 2010 NPT Review Conference had agreed on the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012. Regrettably, the envisaged conference had not yet been convened, but Japan continued to hope that progress towards the successful holding of the conference could be made if the present momentum was maintained. In its view, however, adoption of the draft resolution just voted on, which made pointed reference to Israel only, would have jeopardized that momentum and would not have contributed to confidence-building in the Middle East.

168. Japan hoped that the countries concerned would build mutual confidence through constructive dialogue and bring about the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East at an early date.

169. Mr VINHAS (Brazil), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his Government was following with grave concern the situation in the Middle East, where developments affecting not only regional but also global peace and security were continuing to unfold without an adequate response from the international community.

170. The long-standing Israeli-Palestinian issue and several other issues remained unresolved as a result of inertia, mutual recrimination, or approaches involving threats of military action. It was high time to change the way in which those issues were addressed.

171. The agreement brokered by Russia and the United States regarding Syria's chemical weapons illustrated how constructive dialogue and good faith could create the necessary impetus for negotiated solutions.

172. His country, which advocated universality of the NPT and considered it very important that Israel accede to that treaty and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, recognized that there was good reason for the sponsors of the draft resolution just voted on to feel frustrated and disappointed, and its abstention in no way represented disagreement with them. In fact, it would like to see all stakeholders intensifying their efforts aimed at the early holding, in Helsinki, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

173. It was regrettable that the envisaged Helsinki conference had not been convened in 2012. In Brazil's view, the holding of the conference with the participation of all States of the region would create the much-needed impetus for addressing, in a comprehensive manner, many of the peace and security concerns in the Middle East.

174. The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and the achievement of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region were mutually reinforcing processes. The envisaged Helsinki conference could herald the beginning of a constructive approach to the building of confidence among neighbouring States. Brazil was therefore fully committed to helping to ensure that the conference was convened at an early date.

175. Mr DANIELI (Israel) said that, in rejecting an unconstructive draft resolution on "Israeli nuclear capabilities", Member States had reaffirmed their conviction that politically motivated initiatives singling out a particular Member State had no place in the General Conference.

176. The General Conference had made it clear that direct dialogue among all States of the Middle East was the only way to peace and security in the region. For its part, Israel remained committed to building trust and confidence, which were prerequisites for greater security for all States of the region, through sincere dialogue with its neighbours, and it called upon its neighbours to respond constructively to its attitude.

177. Israel was grateful to all those other Member States which had contributed through their votes to a positive outcome that opened up better prospects for Middle East dialogue. It was also grateful to the Russian Federation for its constructive efforts during the General Conference's current session.

178. Israel hoped that in future the General Conference would concentrate on the real challenges in the nuclear domain — the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and security, and nuclear non-proliferation.

179. Ms TAN (Singapore), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country — a strong advocate of universalization of the NPT and the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards — was continuing to call for all countries not yet parties to the NPT to accede to it and for the DPRK to return to it.

180. Singapore, which would welcome the establishment of a genuine and lasting peace in a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East, was heartened that Israel and Palestine had resumed direct talks, and it hoped that genuine progress would be made on the outstanding issues.

181. Singapore regretted the fact that the envisaged conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had failed to materialize.

182. The abstention of Singapore in the vote that had just taken place reflected its hope that all relevant parties would engage in sincere dialogue with a view to the early establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

183. Mr SWAMINATHAN (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had abstained because it believed that the draft resolution contained elements extraneous to the Agency.

184. Mr KOÇI (Albania) said that his country fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Lithuania on behalf of the European Union.

185. Mr AL HINAI (Oman), speaking for the Arab Group, thanked all those who had voted in favour of the draft resolution on “Israeli nuclear capabilities”.

186. The Arab Group regretted the outcome of the vote and the fact that some Member States that persistently defended the principle of universality of the NPT were continuing to turn a blind eye to that principle whenever the question of Israel’s nuclear capabilities arose. Their opposition to the draft resolution had demonstrated the application of double standards.

187. The application of a single standard in respect of all nuclear issues would help to strengthen the credibility of the Agency.

188. The Arab Group was determined to continue highlighting the dangers represented by Israel’s clandestine nuclear capabilities, as the refusal of Israel to place its nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities under international control was having a negative effect on efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, was a threat to regional and international peace and security, and might even trigger an arms race in the region.

189. The Arab Group remained committed to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. However, Israel did not appear to be ready to participate in the envisaged conference on that issue and was continuing to prevaricate in consultations with the conference facilitator.

190. The countries belonging to the Arab Group hoped that other countries understood their concerns and their desire for peace and security in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.