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President: Ms ANGARA COLLINSON (Philippines)

Later: Ms SHAMPAINE (United States of America)

Mr ANING (Ghana)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement 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
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CERN	European Organization for Nuclear Research
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
ConvEx	Convention Exercise
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
EU	European Union
FIGO	International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
ICERR	IAEA-designated International Centre based on Research Reactor
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
IWAVE Project	IAEA Water Availability Enhancement Project

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KANUPP	Karachi Nuclear Power Plant
LDC	least developed country
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MW(e)	megawatt electrical
MYRRHA	Multi-purpose Hybrid Research Reactor for High-tech Applications
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NRG	Nuclear Research and Consultancy Group (Netherlands)
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PARR	Pakistan Research Reactor
PHWR	pressurized heavy water reactor
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Site and External Events Design
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

WENRA Western European Nuclear Regulators' Association

WMDs weapons of mass destruction

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2016 (continued) (GC(61)/5 and additional information)

1. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that her country's nuclear sector was reviewed regularly by Agency peer missions. In May 2017, an IRRS follow-up mission had reviewed the legal and regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety for all facilities and activities regulated by the State Office for Nuclear Safety. Thanks to the comprehensive action plan put in place by the State Office in response to the findings of the 2013 IRRS mission, the follow-up mission team had concluded that 16 of the 18 recommendations and 17 of the 18 suggestions of the 2013 IRRS mission had been addressed fully and that many improvements had been made.

2. The IRRS follow-up mission team noted that the Czech Republic had significantly enhanced its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety. The new Atomic Act, which had been in force since the beginning of 2017, and the development of supporting regulatory decrees based on Agency safety standards represented significant achievements and had established a solid foundation for a robust safety framework. Improvements in human resource management, including long-term strategic planning, competence mapping and staff training, had been highlighted, as had new good practice relating to the regulator's active engagement with the public through a web conference.

3. The Czech Republic welcomed the conclusion by the Director of the Agency's Division of Nuclear Installation Safety that its State Office for Nuclear Safety was an effective and transparent regulator and that its progress in enhancing regulatory infrastructure duly reflected its commitment to continuous safety improvement and the effectiveness of IRRS missions.

4. The implementation of the new Atomic Act through regulations, guides and procedures remained a priority for the Czech Republic and the project to implement the recommendation concerning the development and implementation of an integrated management system was due to be completed by 2020.

5. The Czech Republic appreciated the significant contribution made by the Agency through its TC programme, which provided the necessary support to allow countries to use nuclear energy in a safe, secure and effective way, and had long held the status of being a net contributor to the programme. In 2017, the country had continued its extrabudgetary financial support of the programme through the PUI by assisting Armenia in upgrading its national nuclear regulatory infrastructure.

6. The Czech Republic appreciated the importance of assured funding to the Agency and so paid its Regular Budget and TCF contributions in full and on time.

7. Despite various, mainly economic, challenges, the use of nuclear energy had a future as possibly the only technology that could currently be deployed on a sufficiently large scale to provide baseload low carbon power, thus ensuring continued energy security and availability in many countries. The Czech Republic would continue to support the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without compromising safety and security and in accordance with safeguards.

8. Ms NAFUNA-MULONI (Uganda) recalled that 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of Uganda's membership of the Agency. The partnership with the Agency through the implementation of the TC programme and other Agency activities had been beneficial for both human resources development and the acquisition of specialized equipment across the various sectors of its government.

9. She conveyed Uganda's gratitude to the Secretariat for its prompt response and continuous support in restoring radiotherapy services following the breakdown of the country's cobalt-60 unit. Uganda also welcomed the Agency's assistance in the expansion of its radiotherapy services.

10. In July that year, her Government had hosted the AFRA 28th Technical Working Group Meeting in Kampala. Her country reiterated its appreciation to AFRA Member States for giving Uganda the opportunity to host that important meeting, and reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to discharging its duty effectively as the chair of AFRA.

11. Uganda continued to prepare for the introduction of nuclear power as part of the diversification strategy to meet future electricity needs for socioeconomic development. It was grateful for the Agency's contribution to the pre-feasibility studies for launching a first nuclear power plant in Uganda. In that context, she reaffirmed the country's commitment to nuclear power infrastructure development and welcomed the Agency's technical advice through the various review missions such as the INIR and the IRRS, which provided a forum for assessing progress on key milestones.

12. Uganda also reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the national infrastructure for nuclear safety, security and safeguards, and welcomed the Agency's assistance towards that end.

13. Development could not be sustained without peace and security, and Uganda therefore appreciated the Agency's role in international coordination to enhance the nuclear security regime and to monitor and safeguard nuclear material to ensure that peaceful nuclear endeavours did not result in nuclear terrorism and nuclear weapons proliferation.

14. Uganda looked forward to a stronger partnership with the Agency in keeping with its motto of 'Atoms for Peace and Development'.

15. Ms NDALICHAKO (United Republic of Tanzania) was pleased to note that science, technology and innovation had continued to play a vital role in helping countries to achieve the SDGs. Tanzania also noted that the theme of the 2017 Scientific Forum would highlight the goals related to health, and would focus on how to employ nuclear techniques in human health, in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

16. Tanzania continued to call for peaceful applications of nuclear programmes and urged all States to cooperate with the Agency in fulfilment of their international obligations. The proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, together with international terrorism, remained a pre-eminent threat to international peace and security. The international community therefore had to confront that challenge boldly and to act decisively. Her country called on all States that were not party to the NPT to accede to it as soon as possible.

17. The results of the IRRS mission requested in 2015 had made it possible to enhance the national legal and regulatory framework for nuclear radiation safety, and had improved the national arrangements for emergency preparedness and response. The Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission, in collaboration with the Agency and other stakeholders, had continued to implement programmes to ensure that sound infrastructure was put in place for a more effective regulatory body in the country.

18. Tanzania was grateful for the Agency's assistance in the development of human resources in the fields of nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, and cancer control and treatment. A procurement process for a brachytherapy machine was continuing, through technical cooperation, which would enable the Bugando Medical Centre to become the country's second cancer centre.

19. Her country valued the Agency's long-standing commitment to assist Tanzania in delivering nuclear technology for development, in particular in the fields of agriculture, livestock development, mining, water resources management, industries and energy. Tanzania's strategy in that regard was to

develop the appropriate infrastructure and human resource capacity for the use of nuclear technology. It was therefore pleased that the Agency had accepted a new project in human resource capacity building, which would strengthen the country's engineering and scientific bases in modern applications of nuclear science and technology.

20. Tanzania supported AFRA, through which the efforts to strengthen nuclear technology applications would be enhanced. Her country was grateful to Member States that were providing extrabudgetary funding to ensure the success of programmes under the PUI, and urged other international partners to join that initiative.

21. MR FOO (Singapore) said that 2017 also marked Singapore's 50th anniversary as a Member of the Agency. Having joined the Agency soon after its independence in 1965, it had received valuable assistance in key areas such as cancer treatment and food safety, when it was most needed. As Singapore developed it began to contribute by working with the Agency to support developing countries in achieving their development goals.

22. His country invited medical professionals to its hospitals for experience sharing in areas such as cancer treatment, nuclear diagnostics and imaging. It also provided the Agency with technical assistance on subjects such as nuclear regulatory frameworks and food safety. To date, Singapore had organized over 35 workshops and hosted over 111 training fellowships and 25 scientific visits.

23. That long-standing partnership with the Agency was formalized under the enhanced Memorandum of Understanding on the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme and had been signed by the Director General during his visit to Singapore in 2015. Under that Memorandum Singapore aimed to enhance regional cooperation in areas such as emergency preparedness and response, food safety, nuclear medicine and nuclear safety.

24. Officials of Singapore's government agencies had benefited from Agency fellowships and received training in areas such as emergency preparedness and response, the sterile insect technique and the drafting of regulations for radiation safety. The Agency had also provided Singapore with useful updates and information during major nuclear incidents, such as the Fukushima Daiichi accident in 2011.

25. Singapore would build on that strong foundation of cooperation with the Agency, in particular to support its efforts to help developing countries and LDCs attain the 2030 SDGs and to promote nuclear safety.

26. His delegation was deeply concerned by the belligerent actions of the DPRK, including its recent missile launches and nuclear tests. Singapore strongly condemned the sixth nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 31 September 2017 and the ballistic missile test over Japan on 15 September 2017. Those were clear violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions including resolution 2375 (2017), posed a severe threat to the peace and stability of the region and increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

27. In that context, his delegation reiterated its support for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' statement of September 2017 on the latest nuclear test. Singapore strongly urged the DPRK to desist from further provocative actions that threatened international peace and security and undermined the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It reiterated its long-standing call for the DPRK to abide by its international obligations, including abandoning its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programme, returning to the NPT, and allowing safeguards verification activities to be resumed within its territory.

28. Governments must adopt national measures and promote international cooperation to counter the serious threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism. In May 2017, Singapore had passed its Terrorism Bill, on the suppression of misuse of radioactive material, which paved the way for

its ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in August of that same year. That Bill made it an offence to use radioactive material to threaten, injure, kill or cause damage to property and the environment. A mandatory death sentence would also be imposed on those who carried out radiological attacks. Singapore supported the Agency's efforts in universalizing the amended CPPNM and encouraged countries that had not already done so to become party to those two important conventions.

29. Many Member States had been victims of major cyber attacks on public institutions and businesses during the past year, which had caused severe disruption and financial and data losses. Nuclear installations were not immune to cyberattacks. Singapore therefore supported the Agency's work in developing additional nuclear security guidance on computer and information security for nuclear installations, and related training programmes.

30. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by consensus at the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security: Commitments and Actions, reflected the collective commitment of Member States to strengthen nuclear security in a comprehensive manner.

31. Singapore noted that certain Contracting Parties to the CNS had applied the principles of the 2015 Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety in line with their national requirements, as shown at the Convention's Seventh Review Meeting. Member States should build on those positive developments and the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident to promote nuclear safety. Singapore called on all CNS Contracting Parties to apply the Vienna Declaration principles, and for the Secretariat to provide relevant technical guidance as soon as possible.

32. Singapore commended the efforts of all parties involved in honouring their undertakings in the JCPOA. The effective implementation of the JCPOA was crucial to assure the international community that Iran's nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes. Singapore urged all relevant parties to continue fulfilling their respective obligations under the JCPOA.

33. His delegation congratulated the Agency for successfully hosting the first International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, and expressed its hope that the Agency would continue to host such high-level conferences on nuclear applications and the TC programme as these continued to be important subjects for many developing countries.

34. Singapore would continue supporting the Agency's work in that area through the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme MOU.

35. Singapore had pledged the full amount of its assessed contributions to the 2018 TCF and would be making its payment in full and on time.

36. Ms TER HOEVE-VAN HEEK (Netherlands) said that the Netherlands continued to place the highest priority on strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone. As the Agency entered a new review cycle, she called on all States Parties to the NPT to continue working together to find areas of compromise and to make progress where possible, in a spirit of cooperation. In the NPT framework, the Agency's role as the only organization with the expertise and the capacity to carry out the necessary verification activities was crucial and must be preserved.

37. The importance of strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime had been clearly demonstrated by the most recent provocations by the DPRK. The Netherlands had joined the international community in strongly condemning that country's sixth nuclear weapons test on 3 September 2017. The DPRK must comply fully with its international obligations, including UN Security Council resolutions, and cooperate fully with the Agency in the application of safeguards.

The Netherlands commended the Agency for maintaining its readiness to send inspectors to the DPRK on short notice, should conditions permit. As the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs had stated, pressure and dialogue were the only means by which a sustainable solution could be achieved.

38. To support the Agency's role in providing robust assurances against nuclear proliferation, efforts should be made to strengthen the safeguards system. To that end, the Netherlands supported the universalization of the additional protocol. Together with a CSA, the additional protocol constituted the current standard of verification enshrined in Article III of the NPT. Her country also supported the Agency's further development of the State-level concept as a necessary tool for keeping the safeguards system sustainable in light of a mounting safeguards burden.

39. The Netherlands commended and continued to fully support the Agency's role in verifying Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA and was pleased that recent reports on the implementation of the JCPOA had shown that Iran was verifiably acting in accordance with the agreement. It was essential that all parties should remain committed to that agreement.

40. The Netherlands attached great importance to strengthening nuclear security globally. She stressed that nuclear security did not impede, but helped to enable, the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and that her country continued to strongly support the Agency's central role in that area. In order to carry out that role, the Agency needed reliable and sufficient funding for its nuclear security activities, including through the Regular Budget. The Netherlands was ready to pledge €1 million to the NSF for the implementation of the Nuclear Security Plan 2018–2021. She invited and encouraged all Member States to commit themselves to the initiative to strengthen nuclear security implementation, set out in INFCIRC/869, which aimed to help enhance national nuclear security regimes.

41. Turning to the issue of safety, she expressed her country's gratitude to the Agency for convening the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS, in which the Netherlands had participated actively. It was important to continue incorporating the lessons learned from Fukushima and working to implement the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. The Netherlands continued to work to improve its robust domestic framework for nuclear safety. During the past year, it had hosted several advisory missions and follow-up missions, including the first ever Independent Safety Culture Assessment conducted for a research reactor at the NRG facility in Petten. In line with IRRS recommendations, the independence of the Netherlands national regulator had been further strengthened on 1 August 2017 by its transformation into an autonomous institution.

42. The Netherlands continued to stress the need for the Agency to have the appropriate technical, financial and human resources to carry out its fundamental role of advancing peaceful uses of nuclear technology for the benefit of all. That held true with regard to both allocations under the Regular Budget and voluntary contributions. To that end, the Netherlands remained a strong supporter of the TC programme and would continue to pledge its full target share to the TCF. At the same time, she underlined the importance of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's activities in that field through the clear setting of priorities, monitoring and project evaluation. She hoped that it would be possible to agree on a new formula for the due account mechanism as soon as possible.

43. The Netherlands recognized and appreciated the steps taken to achieve a better gender balance in the Secretariat and encouraged the Director General to continue its efforts to raise still further the percentage of women in professional and management positions.

44. It was in the interest of every Member State to continue working together to harness the benefits of atomic energy for all humankind. That called for the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards to be upheld and would require Member States' collaborative efforts to realize their common security and development goals.

45. Ms WONGSAENGCHAN (Thailand) congratulated the President on her election and expressed pleasure at seeing a female colleague from ASEAN chairing the current meeting. She was confident that under the President's leadership, the Conference would arrive at a successful conclusion and she expressed her delegation's full support and cooperation.

46. Over the previous 60 years, the Agency had played a crucial role in strengthening global peace and security and promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was due to open for signature in New York that day and constituted an important step towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons and reinforcing the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. Upon the Treaty's entry into force, the Agency would have an important role to play in contributing to its success. Thailand supported the Treaty and urged other Member States to give it their support.

47. On the issue of the DPRK, Thailand joined the international community in expressing its grave concern with regard to recent disturbing developments on the Korean Peninsula. She called on the DPRK to cease its nuclear weapon and missile programmes immediately and called for the strict and full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

48. With regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, Thailand fully supported the implementation of the JCPOA and urged all parties concerned to implement it in good faith.

49. It was evident that the Agency's work had made positive contributions to the attainment of the SDGs in Member States. Thailand valued those contributions highly and appreciated its constructive cooperation with the Agency in that regard, in particular through the TC programme. It looked forward to working closely with the Agency with a view to maximizing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology and applications in achieving the SDGs.

50. On 31 May 2017, during the International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, Thailand had been pleased to sign an agreement with the Agency concerning the hosting of Agency activities in Thailand. That agreement had helped to facilitate the smooth conduct of Agency meetings and activities in the country and would also benefit Thailand's friends in the region. Thailand was now in a better position to serve as a regional training centre and collaborating centre in certain fields of its expertise and hoped to provide strong support to regional initiatives on all nuclear-related matters.

51. In March 2017, together with six other ASEAN countries, Thailand had established the ASEAN Network on Nuclear Power Safety Research with the aim of promoting research and development to support future nuclear power programmes in the South-East Asia region. In addition, within the existing framework of ASEANTOM, Thailand had continued to contribute to regional capacity building. In March 2017, it had hosted a workshop on capacity building and strengthening the nuclear and radiation safety and security network in the ASEAN region. Thailand appreciated the Agency's continued assistance and cooperation with ASEAN and welcomed its support and participation in the fourth ASEANTOM meeting, to be held in December 2017 in the Philippines. Thailand looked forward to the establishment of a formal partnership between ASEAN and the Agency to promote greater and more comprehensive cooperation in areas of common interest.

52. Her country was also grateful for the cooperation and assistance extended to Thailand and the region from other partners and institutions, including the EU, certain national governments and the World Institute for Nuclear Security.

53. Thailand had never shied away from its international commitments. The entry into force in February 2017 of its Nuclear Energy for Peace Act had paved the way for it to accede promptly to other nuclear-related international instruments.

54. Thailand reaffirmed its commitments under the NPT and the Agency's Statute to work constructively with the Agency and all partners to ensure safe, secure, and peaceful uses of nuclear technology worldwide.

55. Ms VICTORIA-KRUSE (Dominican Republic) said that, as a founding member of the Agency, the Dominican Republic was committed to supporting initiatives designed to maximize the benefits of nuclear applications in line with its national sustainable development objectives. It also sought to ensure the responsible use of such technology in order to guarantee the safety of the Dominican people and to work with the international community to use nuclear energy safely and peacefully. Nuclear technology played an important role in achieving the SDGs, thanks to the contribution that it made in areas such as cancer treatment, food production, agricultural pest control and energy production.

56. The Dominican Republic was participating in TC programmes in the domains of human health, the environment, food and agriculture, energy, industry and hydrology. In addition, over the preceding year, more than 30 Dominican professionals had received training in various areas.

57. Where health was concerned, the National Cancer Institute had made significant progress in the provision of radiotherapy services using the latest cancer treatment technology. The Agency had also donated equipment for detecting Zika virus, dengue and chikungunya, which would enable the viruses to be detected within three hours.

58. The Dominican Republic had also used nuclear technology, in the sterile insect technique, to combat the Mediterranean fruit fly. Thanks to the efforts of the Dominican Government and its partners, on 7 July 2017 the country had been declared free from the fly, thereby granting it access once again to key export markets. The Dominican Republic had suffered losses worth approximately US \$42 million owing to the pest and it conveyed its thanks to the Agency for the technical and financial support provided in that regard. The Dominican Republic was well prepared to prevent any future outbreaks and to respond rapidly in order to eradicate the pest. It was also in a position to provide technical assistance to other countries in the region that were susceptible to such problems.

59. With regard to the environment, the Agency had provided the Dominican Republic with a mass spectrometer for use in the project to promulgate regulations to prevent marine contamination in southern coastal areas.

60. With regard to regulation and safety measures, the Dominican Republic had made great progress in the management of radioactive waste; it possessed a storage facility for radioactive waste and disused sources that complied with all of the Agency's safety requirements. In the area of transport, a national network had been established to improve the physical and radiological safety of radioactive materials during transportation. The Dominican regulations on radioactive waste management and on radioactive waste transport should serve as reference models for Central American and Caribbean countries.

61. The Dominican Republic acknowledged the benefits provided by ARCAL, under which it had participated fruitfully in regional projects supported by the Agency. The Dominican Republic was party to most international agreements and treaties adopted with the aim of consolidating the efforts of the international community regarding the safe and peaceful use of nuclear science and applications. The country was also currently working with the Agency to strengthen its national legal framework.

62. The Dominican Republic welcomed the entry into force of the Amendment to the CPPNM, which it had ratified, thereby reiterating its commitment to working with other States to prevent and persecute malicious acts involving nuclear materials and facilities with the aim of improving international security and preventing terrorist acts.

63. The Dominican Republic was a nuclear-weapon-free State and belonged to a region with an impeccable history where nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were concerned. It remained wholly convinced that the establishment of NWFZs was a positive step towards achieving worldwide nuclear disarmament. The CELAC Heads of State had proclaimed Latin America and the Caribbean a “zone of peace”, as reaffirmed in the disarmament declaration adopted at Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic on 25 January 2017.

64. The Dominican Republic reaffirmed its support for the important role that the Agency played in promoting peaceful coexistence and national development and ensuring that atomic energy, rather than posing a risk, was used to achieve progress and well-being for all humankind.

65. Mr BENEDEJČIČ (Slovenia) congratulated the President on her election and stressed that it was only the third time in the Agency’s history that the position had been held by a woman. That achievement was all the more significant in light of an important forthcoming anniversary — November 2017 would mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Marie Skłodowska-Curie, who had developed the theory of radioactivity and coined that term. It was therefore appropriate that the Agency had managed to increase the percentage of women in professional and higher categories to an all-time high. It was also fitting that the Director General had played an active part in the launch of the Vienna Chapter of the International Gender Champions in June 2017. In his efforts to achieve gender parity throughout the Secretariat, the Director General could count on the support of Slovenia, which was also a founding member of the recently established Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear.

66. While developments in the Secretariat were encouraging, those around the world were less so. He referred in particular to the recent nuclear test by the DPRK, which Slovenia strongly condemned. The test constituted a blatant violation of numerous resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and the Agency. As such, it highlighted the importance of the full implementation of the NPT and a speedy entry into force of the CTBT. It also highlighted the need for the DPRK to return to the system of Agency safeguards inspections.

67. In that context, Slovenia welcomed the recent establishment of a DPRK team within the Secretariat, which would further strengthen the Agency’s preparedness for impartial verification — an important monitoring role that it already played in relation to Iran’s nuclear programme. Indeed, the JCPOA clearly showed that even the most difficult issues could be resolved by diplomatic and peaceful means. Slovenia therefore counted on continued compliance with the nuclear deal by all parties. Motivated by its strong attachment to nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of the atom, Slovenia had used the 2017 Bled Strategic Forum as an opportunity to hold a special discussion on global nuclear governance, which had been attended by the Director General.

68. The Director General’s recent visit to Slovenia had also been a highlight of the 25th anniversary of the country’s membership of the Agency. As one of only 30 countries with operating nuclear reactors, Slovenia had always attached great importance to its relationship with the Agency. The Krško NPP continued to operate in a stable manner without any significant incidents and thus remained one of the pillars of the country’s energy supply. Nonetheless, Slovenia remained vigilant in ensuring its continued safety and security in cooperation with the Agency. In May 2017, the power plant had hosted its fourth OSART mission. It had also engaged actively in ConvEx-3, organized by Hungary in June, in which Slovenia had played the role of a neighbouring State. Preparations for the Emergency Preparedness Review mission to take place in November 2017 were under way. In addition, all relevant national agencies had taken part in the 2017 annual emergency exercise, which had been based on a scenario involving a plane crash on the power plant’s turbine building.

69. Slovenia appreciated the Agency’s efforts to develop the scope and efficiency of the TC programme, which provided invaluable support to Member States in using nuclear science and

techniques for their benefit in a safe manner. Slovenia had always supported the programme and strove to accommodate as many requests as possible. In 2017, as in previous years, it had trained Agency fellows and organized scientific visits and workshops for those wishing to learn more about the country's practices. Its experts had also taken part in the Agency's peer review missions. Furthermore, within the framework of the European Commission's nuclear safety assistance programmes, the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration had started working on a project to strengthen the capabilities of the Iranian Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

70. He underlined the importance of international legal instruments, in particular the Amendment to the CPPNM. Slovenian experts had been deeply involved in the preparation of that instrument and firmly believed that it should be ratified by all parties as soon as possible. In that regard, he confirmed his country's willingness to take part in the preparation of the review meeting in 2021. He highlighted Slovenia's continued renewal and strengthening of its network of bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements, including the recent conclusion of a fifth five-year arrangement between the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission on the exchange of technical information and cooperation in nuclear safety matters.

71. Mr BASU (India) said that India had always attached great importance to the Agency's role in promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy and had supported its work in relation to safeguards. He offered his country's sincere condolences with regard to the tragic situation caused by the recent earthquake in Mexico.

72. India's Minister of State for External Affairs had participated in the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Commitments and Actions, held in Vienna in December 2016, at which India had reiterated its commitment to global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. India had signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Bangladesh in April 2017, along with a further two complementary agreements. It was also collaborating with Russian and Bangladeshi partners to establish the Rooppur NPP in Bangladesh. His country had become an associate member of CERN in November 2016, having worked with that organization for five decades. It had also signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with Japan and Viet Nam.

73. In 2017, India had completed seven decades of independence. It had been a year of exceptional achievements in the areas of nuclear power, heavy water, nuclear fuel, uranium mining, rare earth, radioisotopes and cancer care. All of the country's research facilities, including its synchrotrons, cyclotrons and reactors, had achieved their best ever performance. India was making sustained efforts to achieve significant growth in its nuclear energy and nuclear applications programmes.

74. The Indian Government had recently approved the construction of 10 PHWRs in serial mode and of a further two reactors at Kudankulam. Aside from the objective of significantly increasing carbon-free electricity production, that development would give a major boost to the industries producing reactor equipment in India. India now had 21 reactors under construction and 22 in operation, which would increase its capacity to over 22 000 MW(e) by the end of the following decade. It would continue to add further capacity in future. For the purposes of expanding its nuclear power programme, India was also intensifying its exploration and mining operation for the production of uranium. Following the construction of its prototype fast breeder reactor, commissioning activities were progressing steadily while fulfilling all safety requirements.

75. India had expanded its cancer care programme by upgrading six facilities around the country, which would help to increase the number of new patients treated every year from 70 000 to around 140 000 over the following four or five years. It had established a cancer grid connecting over 100 hospitals for diagnostic and therapeutic applications and was working to expand further in the areas of research, education and patient care.

76. In the area of frontier science, India was establishing a small underground research laboratory at one of its uranium mines in order to pursue research on dark matter, which would inspire scientists from all generations.

77. As part of its celebration of 70 years of independence, India had organized a side event during the current session of the Conference. The side event would introduce the country's Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, a centre of excellence in nuclear safety and security and other socially responsible activities. He invited Member States to make use of that facility, under the auspices of the Agency.

78. India looked forward to the Agency's continued leadership in fostering the safe, secure and sustainable use of nuclear energy and would continue to support the Agency in all areas of its work.

79. Ms BATTUNGALAG (Mongolia) reaffirmed the great importance attached by her country to nuclear security and safety, safeguards and the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology.

80. As a country free from nuclear weapons and party to the NPT and the CTBT, non-proliferation was a priority for Mongolia, for the simple reason that it was fundamental to global peace and security. The Agency's safeguards were key to the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

81. Her country had been making the utmost efforts to promote and implement regulatory procedures and standards to assure the peaceful nature of nuclear applications and safety and security. To that end, it had improved its legislative framework and introduced well-developed standards, rules and regulations on radiation safety, radiological protection and the safe management of radioactive sources in accordance with Agency guidance.

82. Mongolia welcomed the Agency's continued support and assistance provided to Member States to improve their nuclear safety standards, and also expressed appreciation for the Agency's contribution to its capacity-building efforts. Her country had been one of the beneficiaries of the Agency's assessment missions in areas of safety and security, which important for assessing the regulatory infrastructure and detection capabilities for radiation, radioactive waste, and safety and security. Mongolia had organized numerous capacity-building workshops to enhance the capacity of its professionals, including a workshop jointly hosted with the Agency in August 2017 on threat assessment and design basis threat.

83. Mongolia supported the use of nuclear technologies in the areas of food and agriculture, human health, water resources and the environment, which were the main pillars of its sustainable development.

84. Her country also valued the Agency's work in responding to human and animal disease outbreaks. The Agency had assisted Mongolia in improving soil fertility and Mongolia had also been working on the improvement of its water resources management. In the further development of nuclear techniques, her country believed that the ReNuAL project would help in attaining its development goals.

85. Mongolia encouraged the development of many applications, including that developed by FIGO (International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics) and NUCARD (web application for the assessment of appropriateness of clinical indications for nuclear cardiology studies), e-learning modules and online training, such as the Virtual University for Cancer Control, which was a very effective tool for sharing experience and educating experts.

86. The TC programme was key to achieving Mongolia's common agenda and her country thanked the Agency for its valuable and essential contribution to its development efforts. Mongolia had been

implementing numerous TC projects with tangible results in the development of all sectors, including health, food and agriculture, industry, science, geology and mining.

87. One of the best outcomes of its partnership with the Agency had been the introduction of nuclear medicine and treatment, in particular in cancer care. Through the TC programme and PACT, gamma radiation protection, X-ray calibration and tomography medical imaging systems had been upgraded and installed, thus considerably boosting healthcare outreach and diagnosis, cancer control and treatment.

88. New laboratories had been established through veterinary projects, with the use of ELISA, which were able to conduct early diagnoses of animal diseases and infections and to detect any further spread of the contaminant.

89. The RCA had been an effective tool in promoting, coordinating and implementing cooperative research, development and training projects in the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology in the Asia and the Pacific region. The 2017 RCA had been adopted at the 38th Meeting of the RCA National Representatives held in Mongolia the previous year and her country would continue to work with its regional partners to achieve joint outcomes.

90. Her country was confident that its CPF for the period 2016–2021 would contribute greatly to its efforts to achieve the SDGs.

91. Mr KYRÖLÄINEN (Finland) said that nuclear power was an important element of the energy mix in many countries, including in Finland, which faced growing challenges in assuring the security of supply and reaching emission reduction targets. Finland had produced nuclear energy safely, reliably and efficiently for 40 years. Its comprehensive know-how was based on the long-standing operation and development of nuclear power plants, which had been carried out in parallel with national research programmes and had resulted in continuously improved safety.

92. Nuclear safety was a key priority for Finland and it had consistently supported the Agency's activities in that area. It was essential that countries using or embarking on nuclear power had a sound legislative framework for nuclear and radiation safety, an independent, competent and well-resourced regulatory body, and responsible licensees with safety as their first priority. In accordance with the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, Finland was committed to sharing its experience and know-how with the aim of enhancing nuclear safety globally.

93. Finland was conducting activities in nearly all phases of the life cycle of a nuclear facility, from design to final disposal, and two NPP projects were under way in the country. The design of the Hanhikivi 1 NPP was being finalized in compliance with Finnish regulations and construction would start in a few years. The construction of the Olkiluoto 3 NPP unit had recently proceeded to the hot functional test phase and commercial operation was expected to start soon.

94. One of Finland's major projects was the construction of a disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel, the first of its kind in the world. The underground repository would make use of advanced technology, mainly developed in Finland, and meet strict safety, security and safeguards requirements. The facility was scheduled to be operational in the early 2020s.

95. Finland was also willing to share its knowledge in the safe use of nuclear energy, especially in nuclear safety and nuclear waste management. The Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) offered its services worldwide through a newly established company STUK International Ltd. The cooperation between Finland and Saudi Arabia was a good example of work of that nature and had achieved wide recognition.

96. The security of nuclear materials and facilities was also a high priority in Finland. His country continued to provide financial and in-kind support to the Agency's nuclear security activities, including through the NSF. Finland would serve as the international coordinator for the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism for the following two years.

97. The proliferation of nuclear weapons was a real concern for the global community and the NPT, which Finland strongly supported, was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The international community had to make concerted efforts to uphold the Treaty and to advance nuclear disarmament.

98. Finland strongly condemned the recent nuclear and ballistic missile tests conducted by the DPRK, the latest in a series of grave violations of international agreements and obligations. They were a serious threat to the stability of the region and to international peace and security. Finland urged the DPRK to fully observe its international obligations, abandon its nuclear programme and commit itself to close cooperation with the international community, including the Agency.

99. Finland gave the Agency its full support in implementing the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran's commitments as set out in the JCPOA, and recalled the importance of ensuring the necessary means for the Agency to carry out its role. Finland was preparing to make another contribution of €200 000 to the Agency for that work, which would bring his country's total contribution to the verification and monitoring of the JCPOA to €1 million.

100. Ms MOLARONI (San Marino) said that, in her country's view, the work by the Agency to increase nuclear safety and security was of vital and pivotal significance and its peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology contributed to the well-being of humankind.

101. She stressed the importance of research in the field of nuclear applications and expressed her country's full support for all activities carried on at the Seibersdorf laboratories. The benefits of the Agency's programmes in the fields of human and animal health, the environment and agriculture were undoubtable.

102. The system of safeguards offered a fundamental tool for ensuring international security and supporting and achieving the goals of the NPT, to which San Marino was a State Party.

103. San Marino supported the Agency's CSA with Iran and the transparency measures contained in the JCPOA and encouraged Iran to follow up on its commitments in a timely manner.

104. As a State Party to the CTBT, San Marino reiterated its condemnation for the DPRK's nuclear tests and threats. It hoped for a peaceful, diplomatic and reasonable de-escalation of tensions in the area and appealed to all countries not to exacerbate the situation. It recognized the major challenge represented by the entry into force of the CTBT but considered that to be an important target for all countries.

105. San Marino supported the creation of NWFZs all over the globe and the emergence of a world free of WMDs and chemical weapons. As a neutral country, it was convinced that peace could be reached more effectively through dialogue, negotiation and the building of trust, and by investing more in education, development and cooperation than in armaments and wars.

106. San Marino would shortly be signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in New York. That instrument constituted a further step in its undertaking to cooperate with all other stakeholders in the international community with the aim of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world.

107. San Marino had become a member of the Agency in 2013. It had signed a CSA with an amended SQP and had no nuclear material on its territory. It had recently established a nuclear

emergency centre. Even as a small country, it looked forward to playing a significant role in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

108. Mr HANNEY (Ireland) conveyed his country's full commitment to working with its partners in the international community, in particular the Agency, in order to make progress under each of the three pillars of the NPT: multilateral nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. As the three pillars were interdependent and mutually reinforcing, Ireland was pleased to assume responsibility with Iceland for co-chairing the Missile Technology Control Regime for one year from mid-October 2017. Ireland also welcomed the 2016 General Conference resolution on nuclear security (GC(60)/RES/10), which had been adopted by consensus. The resolution drew attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, and stressed that the latter was critically needed. The fact that a mere 17% of fissionable material worldwide was earmarked for civilian use spoke for itself.

109. In July 2017, over 70 years after the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the UN had finally adopted a legally binding instrument that outlawed nuclear weapons as the most lethal and indiscriminate category of weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was consistent with and complementary to the NPT, which required all States Parties to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The new instrument strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including the NPT and Agency safeguards derived therefrom, the treaties establishing NWFZs, and the CTBT. The new Treaty could not be ignored and might, in time, have implications for the Agency.

110. The determination on the part of the DPRK to acquire nuclear weapon capability reinforced Ireland's commitment to the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Weapons of mass destruction did not enhance national or international security. They were an existential threat to all peoples and had no place in the international security architecture of the 21st century. Ireland would sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that day and looked forward to its early ratification and entry into force. Ireland called on all Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty so that it entered into force as soon as possible.

111. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of multilateral nuclear disarmament, and the central element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The situation whereby significant progress was made in non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, while progress in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament remained disappointingly limited, was unacceptable. Ireland unequivocally called on States that had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States.

112. Ireland warmly welcomed the historic agreement reached on 14 July 2015 between the E3/EU+ 3 and Iran, and the progress that continued to be made. The JCPOA was entirely consistent with the principles of the NPT and underlined what could be achieved within its framework.

113. In contrast to the progress on Iran, Ireland regretted that the DPRK had continued to undertake nuclear and ballistic missile tests in flagrant violation of several Security Council resolutions. On 3 September 2017, the DPRK had conducted its biggest ever nuclear test and it had been conducting regular ballistic missile tests. Ireland fully shared the serious concern expressed by the Director General regarding the DPRK's nuclear programme. It urged the DPRK to comply fully with all its international obligations, to cease all nuclear testing and to re-engage immediately and without preconditions in the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

114. So long as there was no progress in bringing the CTBT into force, the international community could well wonder how convincing its calls were to the DPRK to cease nuclear testing. The CTBT had

been opened for signature in 1996, but had not yet entered into force on account of the failure of eight Annex 2 countries to ratify it. Ireland called on those eight States to sign or ratify the CTBT as soon as possible, so that the international community's message to the DPRK was coherent and unambiguous.

115. Ireland also regretted that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had been unable to make any meaningful progress towards the long overdue implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. 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, with due regard for the legitimate security concerns of all States in the region. Such a development would not only promote regional security and stability, but would also bolster the NPT. It was important for all sides to remain open to dialogue and engagement, and for every effort to be made to implement the 1995 resolution.

116. For many years the General Conference had been an occasion for dialogue between coastal and shipping States interested in promoting greater communication in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. As an island State, Ireland was particularly interested in the matter and had therefore agreed to succeed Portugal as coordinator of the Coastal States. It had participated in the tabletop exercise organized by the Agency with Portugal in June 2017.

117. Ireland underscored the importance of PACT. It had provided €125 000 in funding for PACT in 2013 and expected to make a further contribution in 2018.

118. Ireland attached great importance to the promotion of gender equality in the UN system. The proportion of women in the Agency's Professional and technical grades had increased from 23% to 29.4% in recent years. Ireland hoped that such progress would continue and accelerate. Gender equality was not a women's issue but an organizational issue. Diversity delivered better decision-making, a matter that was particularly relevant in the current context. As noted by the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs in his speech to the UN General Assembly in 2016, the disproportionate impact on women of nuclear weapons and of illegal arms transfers and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons was a matter of great concern, as was the need to ensure greater gender balance in all disarmament discussions.

119. Ms KJÆRSGAARD PLESNER (Denmark) congratulated the President on her election and said that the fact that she was only the third woman in that important position demonstrated that there was still some way to go to achieve gender equality in that domain. Congratulating the Director General on his reappointment, she observed that continuity of leadership was crucial for the Agency to act as a stronghold of rules-based international cooperation.

120. Her country had welcomed the Director General to Copenhagen and Greenland earlier in 2017. He had visited Nuuk and Kvanefjeld in Greenland. The Premier of Greenland, Kim Kielsen, who had extended the invitation, had accompanied the Director General throughout the entire visit. The visit had confirmed the high value of the cooperation between Denmark and the Agency in her country's preparations for uranium extraction. The governments in both Denmark and Greenland were determined to ensure that any uranium extraction in Greenland complied fully with the highest international standards, most notably those of the Agency. Greenland was now covered by all Agency conventions in the area of safety.

121. For Denmark, the Agency's contribution to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons was of paramount importance. As shown by the current development of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programme, nuclear proliferation was a major threat to international peace and security. Her country strongly condemned the DPRK's repeated nuclear and missile tests and underlined the Agency's important role. The DPRK had to abandon its nuclear programme and fulfil all its international obligations and commitments.

122. Denmark strongly supported the JCPOA, welcomed the continuing implementation of that agreement and emphasized the need for sustained and full compliance. To build confidence, it was necessary that Member States were provided with sufficient and regular information on the implementation of all nuclear-related commitments; the Director General had her country's full support in that matter.

123. The integrity of the Agency's safeguards system was vital. More than ever before, it was essential to uphold the NPT-based regime. Any cases of non-compliance had to be rectified to preserve the integrity of the system, which also applied to the case of the Syrian Arab Republic.

124. Denmark looked to the Agency to provide standards and guidance on nuclear safety and security, including for new technologies such as transportable nuclear power plants. The development of technologies called for the development of safety and security. Any accident or incident could have cross-border effects and all Member States therefore had an obvious interest in promoting nuclear safety and nuclear security worldwide. Furthermore, high standards of safety and security, along with measures to ensure that no nuclear material was diverted for military purposes, were crucial for providing a basis for responsible peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.

125. Denmark was a significant contributor to the NSF but was concerned about the heavy reliance of nuclear security work on voluntary contributions, and called for adequate resources to be made available from the Regular Budget. Her country welcomed the small but positive step in that direction agreed upon for the 2018 budget.

126. Denmark also welcomed the entry into force in 2016 of the Amendment to the CPPNM. The need for and feasibility of further steps to close the gaps in the international legal framework covering nuclear security should also be analysed.

127. Denmark had made the decision not to include nuclear power in its energy mix, as it based its national long-term energy production plans on more sustainable forms of energy, notably wind power. That said, however, her country respected the choice of other Member States and the Agency's statutory obligations.

128. Nuclear technology could make a significant contribution to attainment of the SDGs and her country fully supported the TC assistance provided in crucial areas such as human health, food security, water and the environment. Denmark had pledged its full share of the TCF target for 2018. In a world of rapid technological development, it wished to contribute to the Agency's capacity to make the peaceful uses of nuclear technology available to foster development and growth.

129. Mr DJUMALA (Indonesia) welcomed the Agency's progress and achievements in its overarching activities, in particular the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, which contributed positively to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

130. The world nevertheless continued to be overshadowed by the threat of nuclear weapons. As the gap between nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament continued to widen, a breakthrough was needed. Indonesia therefore welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by 122 States on 7 July 2017 and looked forward to its early entry into force and universalization.

131. Indonesia was eager to support the Agency in strengthening its valuable contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, including through the TC programme. Indonesia sought to mobilize resources to support the TCF through extrabudgetary means and by sharing the cost of TC activities through government hosting arrangements. Indonesia stood ready to continue working with the Agency, not only as a beneficiary, but also as a provider of technical cooperation for other

Member States. The establishment of the IAEA Collaboration Centre at the National Nuclear Energy Agency of Indonesia was intended to serve that purpose.

132. Indonesia had launched the Regional Capacity Building Initiative in support of the TC programme in the Asia and the Pacific region. The aim of the initiative was to promote resource mobilization and to optimize the use of regional resources for capacity building. Indonesia would also continue its support for the PUI in 2018 through expert participation and the provision of support to developing countries for the development of their regulatory activities under the South-South cooperation framework.

133. Indonesia welcomed positive developments in nuclear applications, including the modernization of the Agency's laboratories in Seibersdorf. With regard to nuclear applications in the fields of health, industry and food processing, Indonesia was currently constructing a gamma irradiator facility, which was expected to be operational by early 2018 and to function as a pilot project for other similar irradiators for local governments and the private sector.

134. Indonesia had successfully improved the quality of local rice by using mutation breeding techniques. In all, 22 mutant rice varieties had been officially released by the Ministry of Agriculture, with average productivity of seven tonnes per hectare, compared with the national average of five tonnes per hectare. Indonesia was preparing to organize the first Asia–Pacific Food Forum in Jakarta on 30 and 31 October 2017. The Forum would discuss ways of transforming the global food system into a system that was more resilient and adaptive to challenges, and that was also accessible to all.

135. Indonesia was furthering its efforts to develop and strengthen its nuclear security infrastructure, including through significant progress in fuel conversion from HEU to LEU, the installation of radiation portal monitors in its main ports, the establishment of the Indonesia Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security and Emergency Preparedness, and the implementation of relevant international instruments on nuclear security.

136. Indonesia appreciated the Agency's continuing support for its efforts to develop its nuclear energy programme. The SEED mission that had been conducted in 2015–2016 had proved beneficial in addressing the regulatory aspect of the non-commercial power reactor project.

137. Indonesia noted, as it embarked on its nuclear energy programme, that national confidence in and public acceptance of nuclear energy was increasing. Based on annual public opinion surveys, the public acceptance level had risen over the last five years. The highest acceptance level of 77.53% had been recorded at the end of 2016 and reflected citizens' confidence in the importance of nuclear energy as part of the national energy mix to meet the demand for electric power.

138. Indonesia thanked the Secretariat for its efforts to increase the representation of under-represented countries in the recruitment of Agency staff and urged it to continue such efforts as a matter of priority.

139. Indonesia reiterated its commitment to continue supporting the Agency's work, including by providing high-quality audit services with a view to promoting its accountability and transparency.

140. Mr NAEEM (Pakistan) said that 60 years had passed since Pakistan had realized the enormous potential of nuclear energy for sustainable social and economic development. As it was committed to drawing maximum benefits from peaceful applications of nuclear energy, Pakistan had numerous nuclear facilities in the areas of power, health, agriculture, hydrology, industry, the environment and basic sciences.

141. Pakistan had always enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with the Agency. Owing to the country's acute electricity shortage, it was seeking a greater contribution from nuclear power, which

was a promising option for countries that could not afford renewable energy in the era of climate change. Pakistan had ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change on 11 November 2016 and was committed to remaining cognizant of the threat of global warming.

142. Pakistan had established the Karachi nuclear power plant (KANUPP) in 1972 and it was still in operation after four and a half decades. Pakistan had connected its fourth and fifth nuclear power plants (Chashma 3 and 4) to the national grid during the past year. The construction of two other 1100 MW(e) nuclear power plants near Karachi was proceeding on schedule. Pakistan planned to achieve as much as 8800 MW(e) by the year 2030. It was grateful to the Agency for providing technical support and cooperation, and requested its support for the decommissioning of KANUPP and the Pakistan research reactor (PARR 1) at the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology in Islamabad, which had aged considerably.

143. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which had been established in 2001, enjoyed complete independence from the nuclear energy operators and reflected Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the transparent and safe operation of nuclear facilities. Its regulations were based on the Agency's safety standards.

144. Pakistan thanked the Agency for strengthening its nuclear security capacity, which it recognized as a national responsibility and to which it accorded the highest priority. Pakistan had established a specially trained and equipped nuclear security force with land, air and seaborne components. A dedicated early warning system provided depth to the security architecture. Continuous threat evaluation and institutional reviews were conducted to keep the response mechanism upgraded. The Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security had been fully operationalized. Training was conducted for national and international participants in the fields of nuclear safety, security, material accounting, cybersecurity and human reliability. Collaboration between the Centre and the Agency had increased over the years. The National Institute of Safety and Security and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences were also making valuable contributions to training and education in diverse disciplines at both the national and international level. Pakistan believed that the Agency had a central role to play in coordinating international activities in the field of nuclear security and would contribute to the NSF in 2018.

145. Nuclear hospitals were providing a vital service to the nation. Eighteen cancer hospitals were currently operating under the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and served more than 80% of cancer patients each year. The Commission planned to set up additional nuclear medical centres and was also making significant contributions to food security.

146. Pakistan was committed to maintaining all its civilian nuclear power facilities under Agency safeguards. An agreement had recently been approved for the application of safeguards to two nuclear power reactors (KANUPP 2 and 3).

147. Pakistan appreciated the Agency's major role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, held in May 2017, had showcased some of its contributions to developing countries. Pakistan had greatly benefited from such cooperation, and had also made some modest contributions to the Agency's activities by sharing its experience and providing expert services in several technical areas. Civil nuclear power was essential to meet Pakistan's increasing energy needs and to support sustainable development, and the continuous expansion of nuclear power production capacity remained a national goal. To that end, Pakistan looked forward to the removal of barriers to equitable and non-discriminatory access to civil nuclear cooperation and to membership of technology control regimes.

148. Mr ROJAS SAMANEZ (Peru) expressed his country's condolences to the Mexican Government and people in respect of the earthquakes that had caused such great loss of life and property.

149. As a founding member of the Agency, Peru had always fully supported the Agency's objective to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. He underscored the importance of that objective and commended the Agency on its continuous efforts to ensure that nuclear science and technology were used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all people, thereby complying with its mandate to achieve 'Atoms for Peace and Development'.

150. Peru saw the potential of nuclear energy and technology to contribute to human development. Technical cooperation with the Agency was therefore of the utmost importance for States, in particular with regard to efforts to achieve the SDGs. In that connection, Peru commended the success of the first International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, which had demonstrated the benefits achieved through the use of nuclear technology in the area of development. Peru called on the Agency to hold such conferences frequently and to ensure that the resources for the TC programme were sufficient, assured and predictable.

151. Cooperation between the Agency and Peru had led to important progress in the areas of agriculture and human and animal health, such as the establishment of the first tissue bank in Peru, which, through the use of cultivated cells, was helping to save the lives of individuals — in particular children — with burns over 60% or more of their total body surface. Peru was willing to share its experience with other countries and was also greatly interested in continuing to work with the Agency in the areas of water resources management, the environment and industry.

152. He expressed his Government's sincere thanks to the Director General, the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Government of Japan for the valuable support provided in the wake of the large-scale floods and mudslides caused by the so-called 'coastal El Niño' phenomenon, which had affected more than one million Peruvian residents and engendered multimillion-dollar losses in the national production system and in infrastructure. The contributions received had once again demonstrated the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and would make a vital contribution to improving health conditions and assessing the habitability and usability of various structures.

153. It was important that the Agency worked to strengthen the safety and security regime and ensure the universalization of all relevant legal instruments. He expressed his country's appreciation for the support that the Agency provided to Member States in that respect, with regard both to technological implementation and capacity building and to efforts to continuously improve regulations. Each State was ultimately responsible for guaranteeing the safety and security of all its nuclear materials and facilities. Security measures should apply both to nuclear material used for civil purposes and to that used for military purposes.

154. Peru commended the valuable contributions made by FORO and the support that the forum received from the Agency. The forum performed important work to update, improve and harmonize the regulations of each of its member States.

155. Peru highlighted in particular the support provided by the Agency to efforts to modernize and improve the Peruvian RP-10 nuclear research reactor. He also expressed his country's thanks to the USA for repatriating nuclear fuel used in the RP-10 reactor, which had eliminated the security risk posed by the storage of such materials at the facility.

156. The implementation of the JCPOA was seen by Peru as an important step towards confirming the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and, as a result, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and international peace and security. Peru called on all parties to the JCPOA to maintain their political commitment to implementing the agreement to the letter. The Agency played an essential role in verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of the JCPOA.

157. As a member of the world's first NWFZ, Peru was convinced that the only way of guaranteeing that nuclear energy was used for exclusively peaceful purposes was by ensuring the complete elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. It had therefore supported from the very start the process that had led to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to which Peru had acceded that same day, in the belief that the policy of deterrence inevitably led to a greater take-up in nuclear weapons, which did little to protect national or international safety. The Treaty was not only consistent with the NPT but it also complemented the NPT, thereby strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

158. On the basis of those beliefs, Peru once again condemned in the strongest terms the nuclear programme of the DPRK, in particular its sixth and most powerful nuclear test, which had flagrantly violated the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Those acts posed a serious and unacceptable threat to international peace and security and undermined the non-proliferation regime. Peru had therefore recently declared the ambassador of the DPRK persona non grata in Peru. It was essential that the DPRK should abandon its military nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and that it should allow safeguards to be applied. The Agency needed to remain alert to any developments in the DPRK nuclear programme. The search for a diplomatic solution was becoming increasingly urgent if the Korean Peninsula was ever to be denuclearized.

159. Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico) said that Mexico recognized the Agency's significant contribution to the achievement of the NPT objectives and, as a steadfast promoter of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, supported its commendable dissemination and transfer of peaceful nuclear applications and technology in order to advance the social and economic development of Member States. Mexico also strongly supported the Agency's action in the areas of safeguards, technical cooperation in nuclear science and applications, and nuclear safety and security.

160. Mexico collaborated with the Agency in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology for other nations, in particular developing countries. It had strongly supported the TC programme in 2017, organizing 12 international meetings jointly with the Agency and hosting a visit by the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation in February 2017. With a view to enhancing regional cooperation through the Agency, Mexico had assumed the presidency of ARCAL.

161. Mexico commended the Agency's support for action by other international bodies aimed at achieving the SDGs by contributing to their knowledge and capacities in the areas of human health, agriculture and food, energy, water resources and protection of the environment.

162. Mexico had participated actively in the International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond – Contributing to Development, in May 2017 and encouraged the Agency to continue convening such conferences in the future.

163. Given the importance of bolstering the international framework for nuclear security and the Agency's key role in that regard, Mexico had also attended the International Conference on Nuclear Security in December 2017. It was convinced that a solid international security regime called for a wide-ranging and comprehensive focus on nuclear material and facilities used for both civilian and military purposes. Accordingly, Mexico welcomed the steps taken by some States to facilitate access to data concerning the security of their nuclear arsenals.

164. Mexico commended the Agency's continuous development of technological safety norms for Member States, its advice on the updating of their legal frameworks and services, and its guidelines on the safe design and operation of nuclear facilities and the management of other radioactive material. Mexico collaborated with FORO with a view to achieving maximum nuclear safety and security in member States and thence throughout the Ibero-American region. Its work had led to important synergies with that of the Agency and made a valuable contribution to international safety and security.

165. Mexico strongly condemned the recent nuclear test conducted by the DPRK in violation of the NPT and various Security Council resolutions. It reiterated its appeal to the DPRK to halt such activities, which posed a growing threat to international peace and security and exacerbated tension in the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK should comply with its safeguards obligations and accord the Agency speedy access to its territory. Mexico noted that the Agency was entirely willing to resume its safeguard activities in the DPRK and urged it to continue preparing to verify the country's nuclear programme, including the dismantling of its nuclear arsenal.

166. The acquisition by the DPRK of the capacity to launch nuclear weapons sent out an alarm signal to the international community that it must take resolute action to abolish such weapons. As a strong promoter of disarmament, Mexico welcomed the historic opportunity to promote the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would be opened for signature that day. The Treaty would certainly reinforce the NPT, which required States Parties to engage in negotiations in good faith conducive to nuclear disarmament.

167. Major changes were under way in Mexico, including a process of energy reform focusing on the use of renewable and safe energy sources. The country was committed to a responsible, active and resolute foreign policy aimed at achieving the mutually reinforcing objectives of non-proliferation, disarmament and cooperation.

168. Mexico recognized the Agency's ability to continue bolstering the three pillars of the NPT. It undertook to comply fully with its obligations and to work constructively with the Agency and its Member States to achieve those aims.

169. Mr KOSTOV (Bulgaria) said that Bulgaria was committed to the international community's efforts to achieve non-proliferation and its policy to strengthen global security and stability. Safeguards were key in that regard. Bulgaria called for the universalization of the NPT and the additional protocol, and believed that safeguards activities played an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT.

170. Bulgaria fully supported the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. His country encouraged all States in the region to renew their efforts to convene a conference on that issue with the participation of all stakeholders. Bulgaria regretted the decision of the Arab States to include the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference and firmly believed that only in a spirit of trust and cooperation could the desired consensus be reached and progress made towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

171. Bulgaria categorically condemned the repeated nuclear tests and missile launches by the DPRK, which led to further escalation of the tensions in the region and undermined world peace and security. His country called on the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations, to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities and to abandon all its nuclear and ballistic missile activities, including its uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

172. Bulgaria encouraged the Agency to continue its review of safety standards by incorporating the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. In that way, the conclusions from the Director General's report on that issue would be reflected fully in the Agency's documents and would help to enhance safety worldwide.

173. With regard to non-electrical applications of nuclear power, the Agency had been able to provide Member States in the European region with emergency assistance in response to the outbreak of lumpy skin disease in 2016. Bulgaria had been affected by that disease the previous year and the Agency's prompt response had prevented a possible worsening of the situation.

174. That year, the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency had celebrated its 60th anniversary, and the celebration forum had been attended by members of the Bulgarian Parliament, senior government officials, Agency representatives, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna, Russian Federation, foreign regulators, and representatives from the nuclear sector in Bulgaria and from other countries. The Nuclear Regulatory Agency was a respected and sought-after partner by other countries' regulatory bodies and leading expert organizations.

175. In November that year, the licence for the operation of Unit 5 of Kozloduy NPP would expire. The review and assessment of the documentation was in the final phase and was expected to be completed at the end of October 2017.

176. Another important task was the construction of the national disposal facility for low and intermediate level radioactive waste, funded by a grant agreement by Kozloduy International Decommissioning Support Fund, administered by the EBRD. The value of the project's first phase was over €71 million and its completion was scheduled for 2021.

177. Working in close cooperation with the Agency and in fulfilment of its commitments to the Agency, Bulgaria had hosted several events in various areas of nuclear energy applications that year. Those events had been attended by a large number of Bulgarian and foreign trainees, which contributed to dissemination of the knowledge available to the Agency. Thus, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, together with Kozloduy NPP, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, had taken part in the International Exercise for Responding to a Nuclear Accident ConvEx-3, organized by the Agency earlier in 2017.

178. The second meeting of the Steering Committee of the European and Central Asian Safety Network had been hosted by the Nuclear Regulatory Authority in June 2017. A Country-level Evaluation and Audit had been conducted by the OIOS in Bulgaria in March that year. His country had provided full support to the Agency's team in order to assure transparency and openness in its collaborative activities.

179. In 2013 and 2016, full-scope IRRS and follow-up IRRS missions had been conducted in Bulgaria. Taking into account the results of those missions and in its desire to expand the use of the Agency's services, Bulgaria had requested the Agency to conduct an ARTEMIS mission, which was scheduled for the first half of 2018.

180. At the end of 2017, the current cycle of the TC programme would be finalized. In accordance with its CPF priorities, Bulgaria had participated in that cycle with national projects in the field of nuclear medicine, agriculture and nuclear applications. Together with the Agency's experts, his country was working to fulfil the relevant working plans and to achieve the expected outcomes. Bulgaria also participated actively in European regional projects.

181. The TC programme was a major tool for supporting the efforts of Member States to address priority issues in human health, food and agriculture, water and the environment, and industry, among

others. The programme also helped Member States to identify and meet future energy needs, and to improve nuclear safety and security worldwide.

182. Mr ANDEREYA (Chile) expressed his country's condolences to the Mexican people and Government on the recent natural disaster in their country.

183. Earlier in 2017, Chile, together with 122 other UN Member States, had celebrated the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was the most complete and advanced instrument dealing with that matter in a legally binding manner. Once it came into force, it would join the global architecture created to support international peace and security. That day — 20 September 2017 — the Treaty had been opened for signature and would be signed by the President of Chile. The Treaty would support the NPT, which remained the cornerstone of international security, which Chile was anxious to preserve.

184. It was time to move on from discussions and promises to action, to ensure the real and effective fulfilment of commitments made towards achieving general, complete and irreversible disarmament. It was unfortunate that, despite all the commitments, no progress had been made towards nuclear disarmament since the adoption of the NPT.

185. The international community eagerly awaited the accession to and ratification of the CTBT by all countries listed in Annex II. After more than 20 years, the political will and compromise required to bring the CTBT into force remained lacking. States appeared satisfied with maintaining a de facto moratorium on nuclear tests, as if that were in fact the objective of the NPT. All the more worrying, there appeared to be scant interest in progress towards the achievement of a state of nuclear peace. On the contrary, States had shown renewed determination to develop new and more sophisticated nuclear weapons, via subcritical testing, which was ultimately another way of undermining the spirit of the NPT.

186. He voiced his country's great concern regarding the DPRK nuclear programme. The DPRK's repeated violations of the NPT and the UN Security Council resolutions, in addition to the nuclear tests — which, on the occasion of the most recent test, the authorities in the DPRK had described as a hydrogen bomb explosion — and the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles that had violated the airspace of neighbouring countries, were a form of provocation and posed a threat to international peace. Such actions should not be tolerated.

187. As Chile set great store by nuclear security, it had participated actively in the nuclear security summits, which had served to promote and strengthen, and ensure strict compliance with, the legal, political and technical instruments adopted with the aim of protecting citizens from nuclear threats. In that context, Chile supported the adoption of a comprehensive approach that involved all nuclear materials, including, importantly, nuclear materials used for military purposes, which represented 85% of all existing nuclear material.

188. Chile continued to cooperate with the Agency in efforts to strengthen the additional protocol and ensure its universalization, in the belief that it served to substantially improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system.

189. Chile accorded high priority to security during the transportation of nuclear materials; it had therefore insisted on maintaining the matter on the Agency's agenda. Chile was an active member of the informal Dialogue between Coastal and Shipping States and, in 2017, it would be participating in a practical exercise in that area in Lisbon. It was essential that coastal States were protected against the negative effects of accidents during the transport of highly radioactive nuclear material.

190. With the active collaboration of the Agency through the TC programme, Chile was developing projects to determine the effect of pests, heavy metals and pollutants detected in continental aquatic ecosystems important to farming and agro-industry.

191. He expressed his country's appreciation for the support provided by the Agency and the Government of Japan with regard to the launch, in cooperation with the University of the Andes and the Arturo López Pérez Foundation, of a master's degree in advanced radiotherapy, in which individuals from 12 countries in the region were participating.

192. With regard to public safety, thanks to the Agency's contributions, technical training had been provided and materials acquired for the Microanalysis Service of the Nuclear Forensics Department of the Investigations Police of Chile. Research conducted during the project had generated scientific knowledge which had been presented at various international congresses and seminars.

193. Mr HALIMOVIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) confirmed that Bosnia and Herzegovina had adopted the most important international treaties, conventions and agreements related to the Agency's work. As a member of the Agency since 1995, it continued to support the organization's mandate to promote nuclear safeguards and verification, nuclear safety and security, and cooperation in the fields of nuclear science and technology.

194. Current challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime reaffirmed the need to achieve the highest standards in the field of nuclear security and non-proliferation. Bosnia and Herzegovina was committed to achieving the universalization and effective implementation of the NPT and recognized that the Agency safeguards system was the only mechanism that verified the non-diversion of nuclear activities for military purposes and ensured compliance with non-proliferation obligations undertaken by States Parties to the NPT.

195. The TC programme was an essential element in the interaction between Member States and the Agency. The programme, which was one of the main instruments for transferring nuclear science and technology to Member States in order to promote social, economic and integral development, was valued highly by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the years, the country had benefited from various projects in many fields, and with the assistance of the Agency had upgraded its capabilities in the areas of nuclear technology, radiation protection and compliance with nuclear safety standards. It would continue to work with the Department of Technical Cooperation to improve and strengthen its national capabilities in radiation protection and nuclear safety.

196. In that context, he congratulated the Agency for organizing the first International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development. His country's participation at the ministerial level demonstrated the importance of the conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

197. In May 2017, the Director General had visited Bosnia and Herzegovina and met the Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Minister of Civil Affairs, with a view to strengthening cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Agency. The country looked forward to continued support from the Agency through the TC programme.

198. Bosnia and Herzegovina had participated in the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held in March and April 2017, and had presented its national report. Affirming the importance of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Bosnia and Herzegovina had also participated in the third Extraordinary Meeting and the Organizational Meeting for the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention, held in Vienna in May 2017. Its corresponding national report would be presented in May 2018.

199. As a State Party to the Joint Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina reiterated its position concerning activities conducted by a neighbouring country, namely the construction of facilities for the storage and disposal of low and intermediate level radioactive waste close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. He once again expressed his country's concern with regard to the environmental impact of those activities on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

200. Mr BENS (Belgium) said that Belgium had demonstrated exemplary transparency in its continuous efforts to raise safety standards in its peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The country had received a follow-up mission in January 2017 to the 2016 SALTO mission and was preparing to receive a follow-up to the 2013 IRRS mission at the end of 2017. Belgium had worked hard at raising safety awareness within its NPPs and a number of initiatives bore testament to its commitment to high safety standards, including the adoption of a law reforming physical checks and the implementation of WENRA reference levels. Belgium would continue to promote, in partnership with the Agency and the EU, the harmonization and strengthening of safety standards in all countries and in that regard welcomed the implementation of the Vienna Declaration as part of the CNS Review Meeting process.

201. Following terrorist attacks on its territory, Belgium had adopted additional security measures such as the deployment at Belgian nuclear sites of military personnel, who would shortly be replaced by specially trained armed police units. Belgium had learned a great deal about response methods thanks to its cooperation with partner States and believed that the Agency must play a central role in improving nuclear security practice as coordinator, promoter of best practices and provider of technical assistance. As a depositary of the CPPNM, the Agency also played a crucial role in implementing the Amendment to that Convention. With the aim of taking a holistic approach to nuclear security, Belgium was working diligently towards converting its BR2 reactor from HEU to LEU fuel. Regarding radiological security, a preliminary bill had been approved by the Government and would shortly be submitted to Parliament. Belgium was confident that the swift installation of technologies that provided an alternative to high activity sealed sources would, in many cases, be very helpful. It therefore urged the Agency to remain up to date with new medical and industrial technologies that could replace sealed sources.

202. Belgium was satisfied with the Agency's professional approach to its verification mission and the modernization of its tools. Now that the State-level concept and the new State-level approaches had been implemented in States under integrated safeguards, Belgium encouraged the Agency actively to pursue ways of boosting effectiveness and efficiency. A cost-benefit analysis of the State-level approaches and a risk analysis would serve as a good foundation. Efficiency gains were essential if the Agency was to be capable of managing the rising number of verification missions. In that regard, Belgium noted that unannounced inspections, which the country had begun to receive one year previously, could be optimized in terms of efficiency.

203. Belgium also welcomed the full implementation of the JCPOA and called upon participating Parties to continue to apply all of the provisions of the Agreement. Its support for the Agreement had been given tangible form in 2017 through an extrabudgetary contribution of €150 000.

204. In addition to its contribution to the TCF, Belgium was contributing €480 000 in extrabudgetary funds to support radiotherapy and nuclear medicine programmes and the upgrading of the Agency's laboratories.

205. Belgium had decided to remain an active player in the fields of nuclear research, nuclear medicine and radioisotope production. It welcomed the Agency's designation of the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre as an ICERR. The Centre would continue to use its technical and scientific experience to serve other Member States and build their capacities. In addition, Belgium was pursuing the development of MYRRHA research infrastructure. Consultations on the project were in progress

with international partners. The Belgian Network for Radiation Applications in Healthcare, Rad4Med.be, was evidence of the country's considerable knowledge base in nuclear medicine. Belgium would continue to play a major role in radioisotope production primarily using the BR2 reactor at the Nuclear Research Centre and the Institute for Radioelements. The BR2 reactor had undergone a maintenance and modernization operation in 2016, which meant that it would remain operational until at least 2026.

206. Belgium expressed the hope that the Agency would respond to the different expectations of its Member States, assist certain Member States during decommissioning and offer developing countries targeted training to maximize the impact of its technical cooperation. The implementation of efficient and effective safeguards was crucial. Belgium trusted that the Agency would prudently manage its budget in the years to come.

207. Mr ASHHAR bin Haji KHALID (Malaysia) said that the NPT remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the fundamental basis for realizing the goal of general and complete nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, of which Malaysia would become a signatory when it opened for signature in New York later that same day, was a historic milestone that reaffirmed Member States' commitment to the steps urgently needed to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament.

208. The Agency played a key role in the pursuit of the goals of the NPT. Malaysia was committed to sustaining and building on its mutually beneficial partnership with the Agency and potential partners in various activities to promote safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

209. As it aspired to embark on a nuclear power programme, Malaysia had hosted its first INIR mission in October 2016. It was strongly committed to fulfilling its obligations to the international instruments related to nuclear safety, security and safeguards. While awaiting approval of its comprehensive nuclear law, Malaysia was pursuing various preparatory activities in order to sign, ratify and accede to those international instruments without delay.

210. Malaysia recognized the Agency as the sole competent technical authority for independent verification of the respective nuclear safeguard obligations of Member States.

211. Malaysia commended the Agency and all parties concerned for their support for the implementation of the JCPOA.

212. At the same time, Malaysia was gravely concerned about the situation on the Korean Peninsula, in particular the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches conducted by the DPRK. Malaysia strongly condemned such acts of provocation, which posed a grave threat to international peace and security and seriously undermined the international non-proliferation regime. His country called on the DPRK to halt all its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, to comply fully with its international obligations, to return promptly to the NPT and to allow the full and effective implementation of comprehensive safeguards.

213. Welcoming the adoption of the 2018–2021 Nuclear Security Plan, he said that the participation of one of his country's ministers in the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security: Commitments and Actions attested to Malaysia's commitment in that field. Malaysia supported universal adherence to the CPPNM and its Amendment, although it had yet to accede to the Convention. In realizing that objective, Malaysia welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities in November 2017.

214. Malaysia's collaboration with the Agency had yielded fruitful results, for example the Malaysia–Thailand tabletop and field exercise on combating illicit trafficking in radioactive materials, the development of borehole disposal and the mobile hot cell facility. Malaysia expressed its sincere

appreciation to the donor countries, notably Canada, the EU, Japan and the USA, for their support for its nuclear security activities. It also highly appreciated the support provided by the Agency for its nuclear security capabilities at the recent 2017 Southeast Asian Games.

215. Malaysia attached great importance to strengthening all aspects of nuclear safety. The outcome of the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS and its previous meetings would further strengthen States Parties' national capabilities in nuclear safety. Malaysia looked forward to benefitting from such meetings once it had acceded to the Convention.

216. Malaysia was currently engaged in cooperation with the Agency in the fields of radiation protection and safety, research reactor safety, radiological emergency, environmental monitoring, safety of spent fuel management and radioactive waste management, and would continue to work closely with the Agency to improve and strengthen the relevant aspects of nuclear safety according to the safety priorities identified in the Director General's report on the 2018 Nuclear Safety Review.

217. Malaysia commended the successful organization of the 2017 International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development. Cooperation with the Agency had been rewarding, with shared benefits from various activities under the country's third CPF 2017–2021. For 2016–2017, Malaysia had received a total of 30 fellowships, 52 scientific visits and 84 visits by Agency experts, while 31 Malaysians had participated in the Agency's training courses. During the same cycle, Malaysia had offered training and advisory services to 64 experts and had hosted a total of 28 fellowships and 9 scientific visits.

218. Malaysia recognized the importance of nuclear science and technology and its application in realizing the 2030 SDGs. To that end, in July 2017, it had successfully hosted a seminar with the Agency and the UN Country Team in Kuala Lumpur to promote greater awareness of the contribution of nuclear technology to social and economic development.

219. Malaysia welcomed the ministerial conference on nuclear applications planned for 2018 and the forthcoming 2017 International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century, and looked forward to the constructive participation of Member States in those events. Malaysia was pleased to announce that one of its ministers from the Prime Minister's Department would participate in the Conference on Nuclear Power in Abu Dhabi.

220. Malaysia recognized the contribution of ReNuAL to scientific and research activities and supported the Agency's efforts to modernize the nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf. His country was honoured that its Collaborating Centre in the field of radiation processing of natural polymer and nanomaterial had been extended for a third term from 2016 to 2020, and it looked forward to receiving the Agency's recognition for its gamma greenhouse.

221. Notwithstanding Malaysia's firm principle of striking a balance between promotional and non-promotional activities when allocating resources, it believed that all Agency programmes and activities were of equal merit and was only too aware that no activities could be performed without adequate and sustainable resources. For that reason, Malaysia would continue to honour its contributions to both the Regular Budget and the TCF in full and on time. It encouraged all Member States to do so to enable the Agency to fulfil its responsibilities as provided for in the Statute.

222. Mr ARCILLA (Philippines), congratulating Ambassador Angara Collinson on her election as President of the 61st regular session of the General Conference, said that it was an honour for him to see a fellow Filipino at the helm of such an important meeting and all more remarkable in that she was the only woman to have chaired the Conference. That, he hoped, was a portent of a future in which more women and more representatives from developing countries could assume such high office.

223. He remarked that the growing membership of the Agency attested to the value attached by States to its mission, in particular, the contribution of nuclear science and technology and its applications to the achievement of development goals. For its part, the Philippines, working on a platform of poverty reduction and inclusive growth, had become one of the region's best performing economies, largely thanks to the boost which nuclear science and technology had given to its growth, development and prosperity.

224. Thus, to ensure safe access to water, the Philippines had worked in partnership with the Agency as one of three pioneer countries in the IWAVE Project, and had adopted the integration of isotope techniques in its national groundwater assessment programme. In addition, as an archipelagic country with extensive marine resources, it was pleased to have been re-designated as an IAEA Collaborating Centre for Harmful Algal Bloom Studies. The Philippines was also playing an active role as team leader for the expanded regional project on Compendium Materials on Nuclear Science and Technology for High School Teachers for the 2018–2019 cycle.

225. The Regional Conference on Prospects of Nuclear Energy in the Asia–Pacific Region, held in Manila in 2016, had accelerated national efforts to draw up a plan with wide public support that would lead to a national position on the inclusion of nuclear power in our country's energy mix. In that context, he noted that energy was one of the priority areas listed in the CPF 2016–2021, alongside food and agriculture, natural resources and environment, industry, human health, and nuclear safety and security.

226. The Philippines had consistently called for the provision of sufficient, adequate and predictable resources for the Agency's TC programme. At the same time, it had campaigned for a better balance in the allocation of resources for the Agency's promotional and non-promotional activities. In that regard, he reiterated the importance of a more balanced representation of developing countries in the Secretariat, in particular at the senior and policymaking levels. While it drew encouragement from the increase in the number of women in the Agency, it strongly urged the Secretariat to establish benchmarks to monitor progress in bridging the gender and country gaps, as part of its best management practices.

227. With regard to nuclear safety and nuclear security, the Philippines recognized the valuable work of the Agency in striving to strengthen the global nuclear safety regime by filling gaps in the overall nuclear safety framework through supplementary guidance documents. It stressed, however, that consensus should not be pursued at the expense of weakening the overarching imperative of safety.

228. Nuclear security was another important aspect of the Agency's work. In that regard, his country welcomed the Nuclear Security Plan for 2018–2021, which provided part of the road map for the Agency's work on nuclear security in the coming years. For its part, the Philippines was committed to playing an active role in strengthening nuclear security and would be holding the fourth meeting of ASEANTOM in Manila in December 2017, in cooperation with the Agency. It hoped that the meeting would be another building block in consolidating the global nuclear security architecture.

229. Where nuclear non-proliferation and Agency safeguards were concerned, he reported that the Philippines, guided by the Constitution, which prohibited nuclear weapons on Philippine territory, and by its obligations under the Bangkok Treaty establishing an NWFZ in Southeast Asia, had actively participated in the negotiations and joined 121 other countries in adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty was a crucial step towards the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, for which the Philippines had been campaigning since the early days of the UN. The Philippines believed that the new treaty would reinforce, and not supplant, the NPT, in particular its nuclear disarmament pillar.

230. The DPRK's drive to be recognized as a nuclear weapon State through its persistent and increasingly alarming nuclear and ballistic missile tests was a matter of grave concern. A universal treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons might be the only solution and the third way to a safer world. The Philippines therefore strongly urged the DPRK to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, in compliance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, return to the NPT, and cooperate with the Agency in implementing its CSA. In that context, it called on the DPRK to heed the joint communiqué of the 50th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, facilitated by the Philippines as Chair, as a possible way forward.

The meeting rose at 1.05 pm