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President: Ms ANGARA COLLINSON (Philippines)

Later: Mr SPASSOV (Bulgaria)

Mr HAMMER (Australia)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AAEA	Arab Atomic Energy Agency
AFCONE	African Commission on Nuclear Energy
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
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
AU	African Union
CBPP	contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
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
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LEU	low enriched uranium
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PET	positron emission tomography
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2016 (continued) (GC61/3 and additional information)

1. Mr KANDJOZE (Namibia), noting that the global community was increasingly aligning itself with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, welcomed the Agency's reconsideration of not only its strategic agenda in that direction but also its motto, to include a reference to development, and said that Namibia's national development framework had also been informed by the SDGs.

2. The Agency, however, should continue to strengthen development efforts through the TC programme in priority areas such as access to potable water, clean reliable energy sources and quality affordable health care, along with poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change. In the context of environmental protection and climate change mitigation, nuclear energy would remain a competitive option.

3. As a leading producer of uranium, Namibia attached great importance to the value added by the nuclear fuel cycle. Cognizant, however, of the need for the highest standards of safety, security and safeguarding of nuclear material, Namibia was committed to improving its own regimes in those three areas, including by improving its regulatory and institutional infrastructure in line with Agency recommendations and standards.

4. Namibia had recently deposited its instrument of ratification of the Amendment to the CPPNM and it welcomed the convening of the International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities in November 2017 with a view to strengthening protection measures for nuclear material in domestic storage, use and transport. It also welcomed the submission to the General Conference of the Nuclear Security Plan 2018–2021, which was the product of a long process of consultation and negotiation. Nevertheless, however critical nuclear security was, it must not impinge on the inalienable right of Member States to the peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

5. Namibia had valued the recent International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, as a clear demonstration of the programme's positive impact in Member States. For its part, Namibia had successfully introduced, with support from the TC programme, radiation therapy services for patients who had previously had no access to such cancer treatment. It had also used crop mutation techniques to improve local crops and was at that time harvesting crops with a better yield and drought resistance profile, essential for Namibia's climate conditions. Furthermore, the TC programme had been instrumental in transferring key technology for many of Namibia's national development priorities leading to tangible progress in human health and food security, in particular.

6. In closing, he said that the challenges faced by the international community were not insurmountable. A multilateral approach predicated on the equality and mutual benefit of all parties was the foundation for a better future around the world.

7. Ms ROBERTON (New Zealand) underscored New Zealand's full commitment to the Agency and the core principles that underpinned its work, including non-proliferation. Her country was deeply concerned by the situation in the DPRK, condemning its latest nuclear test and urging it to cease further tests and comply with its international obligations without preconditions. New Zealand lauded the success of the JCPOA and encouraged Iran to continue to fully engage with the process, stressing

that full implementation was critical to maintaining the trust and confidence of the international community. All Member States had a stake in the continuing implementation of the JCPOA as it strengthened the international non-proliferation regime and made an important contribution to regional peace and security.

8. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons helped to strengthen international commitment against nuclear weapons, reinforced the obligations contained in the NPT and provided a sense of progress for the many concerned about the risks of nuclear weapons. New Zealand would be signing the Treaty later that day in New York and noted the relevance of the Treaty to the Agency's work, particularly in safeguards. It strongly emphasized the key role played by the Agency in ensuring the non-diversion of nuclear material from peaceful purposes and welcomed the way in which the Treaty locked in a State's safeguards obligations at the time of its entry into force while also allowing for future developments, thus supporting the Agency's safeguards system.

9. The work done in recent years to advance the safety and security of nuclear materials must be recognized and further developed. New Zealand reiterated its firm conviction that all countries developing and using nuclear energy must apply the highest safety and security standards through all stages of the fuel cycle, including waste management and transport. New Zealand had not chosen to generate nuclear energy but, along with its small island developing State neighbours, would still suffer the consequences of a nuclear accident in their region, particularly one occurring during the maritime transport of nuclear material through the Pacific. It therefore greatly valued the confidence-building dialogue between coastal and shipping States and strongly supported efforts to improve the international nuclear liability regime, including through INLEX, by addressing the concerns of non-nuclear States. New Zealand considered the Agency's work on nuclear security to be indispensable and, having recently hosted a very useful IPPAS mission, encouraged other States to consider strengthening their national nuclear security regimes in that way. It was pleased to announce, having been a regular contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund, a further contribution of \$150 000 and was also pleased to continue its collaboration with the US Department of Energy and the Government of Australia on nuclear security issues.

10. Her country acknowledged and supported the Agency's work in the non-power applications of nuclear technology. The Director General's recent visit to the Pacific had provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the relevance of the Agency's work in the region. New Zealand worked closely with the Agency on a range of peaceful activities, including support for its agricultural sector and the prevention of chronic diseases, and was pleased to support the ReNuAL project. It welcomed the accession of a woman to the post of President of the General Conference and, in general, the greater role being played by women in the Agency.

11. Mr AL HINAI (Oman) said that Oman was taking vigorous action, in cooperation with the Agency, to build its capacity to use nuclear techniques to curb all communicable and non-communicable diseases. The Scientific Forum on Nuclear Techniques in Human Health: Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment had provided his country with an opportunity to familiarize itself with the most recent advances in that area.

12. Molecular imaging centres had been established in two hospitals in Muscat and a circular accelerator had been employed to produce radioactive isotopes for PET scanning. Efforts were currently focusing on the establishment of an integrated quality management system in the radiology, diagnosis, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy sections of the two hospitals as part of a TC project with the Agency. The project would be extended during the 2018–2019 cycle to other PET scanning and circular accelerator centres. Agency experts would assess the quality management system in 2018 in the light of the Agency's standards and guidance.

13. Oman was grateful to the Agency for its technical support for sustainable development, particularly in relation to the CPF for 2018–2021, which had been adopted in September 2016.

14. Oman had participated in the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS held in April 2017. It had acceded to the Convention on 26 August 2013 and called on all parties to take the requisite steps to address the challenges pertaining to the improvement of safety and the development of emergency plans. Oman underscored the importance of complying with the principles enshrined in the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. It was essential to review at future meetings the technical standards applied by the Contracting Parties with a view to ensuring compliance with those principles.

15. As a country that had no NPPs and currently no intention of building any, Oman commended the decision taken by the President of the Seventh Review Meeting to hold a meeting to discuss the challenges faced by States with no NPTs in complying with their obligations under the Convention. It also supported the proposal by the Review Meeting that the Agency should organize seminars and dispatch experts to support the full participation of such States in the review process and to ensure that they complied with their obligations under the Convention. Oman also considered that INCIRC/572, which contained guidelines regarding national reports under the Convention, should be reviewed in order to specify the information to be provided by States without nuclear installations, thereby facilitating the submission of such reports.

16. A historical event had occurred on 7 July 2017 when 122 States had adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons following arduous negotiations at the United Nations. Oman had voted in favour of the Treaty, motivated by its support for the elimination of all nuclear, chemical and biological WMDs. It hoped that the Treaty, together with the NPT and the CTBT, would help to achieve genuine nuclear disarmament.

17. Oman also hoped that the Treaty would support efforts to create a Middle East zone free of WMDs, in particular nuclear weapons, and to have all nuclear facilities in the region placed under comprehensive Agency safeguards. The truth was that safety and security in the Middle East would never be achieved while the nuclear threat still existed. It was therefore necessary to work jointly, diligently and persistently to eliminate that threat, thereby promoting peace and stability in the region and the world as a whole.

18. Mr FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) congratulated the President on her election and welcomed the fact that a woman was finally presiding over the Agency's most important forum.

19. Cuba congratulated the Director General on his re-election by acclamation and Granada, a fellow Caribbean State, on its new membership at the Agency. Recent natural disasters in their region highlighted the urgent need to tackle climate change and to apply special, differentiated treatment for small island developing States. He thanked the United Nations system for its solidarity and assistance and, in the hope that new nuclear applications would be able to foresee and effectively mitigate natural disasters, urged the Agency to step up its efforts in that direction.

20. His country recognized the enormous efforts that the Secretariat had dedicated to organizing the first International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, in May 2017. Its excellent results and high-level participation demonstrated that the TC programme was the primary means of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The TC programme was a priority for the vast majority of Member States and Cuba fully supported the regular holding of the Conference. Examples of the TC programme's impact over its 60 years of existence justified efforts to strengthen it with additional financial and human resources.

21. Cuba attributed great importance to the application of nuclear technologies in key social and economic areas such as food security, agriculture, the environment and human health, in particular cancer control.

22. He reaffirmed his country's support for the ARCAL programme and associated security projects, which contributed to the strengthening of national infrastructure for radiological protection and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. He highlighted the results from the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security: Commitments and Actions, and lauded the excellent cooperation between his country and the Agency in implementing the INSSP, which had strengthened Cuba's prevention, detection and response systems.

23. Cuba attached great importance to nuclear and radiological security activities and had deposited its instruments of acceptance of the CNS and of accession to the Joint Convention in July 2017. Cuba also recognized the important work accomplished by FORO, which was celebrating its 20th anniversary. Cuba's commitment to safeguards was showcased by the satisfactory results obtained during Agency inspections and ten consecutive years of upholding double certification. It supported efforts to improve the efficiency of safeguards while respecting the legitimate rights of States and maintained that voluntary provisions must not be imposed as obligatory.

24. Cuba lauded the positive results from the implementation of the JCPOA in Iran, which was proof that dialogue and negotiations were appropriate avenues for the resolution of differences. In that context, he also reaffirmed his country's support for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

25. Cuba would be signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and hoped that the Treaty would be the first step by the international community towards the total elimination of world's nearly 15 000 existing nuclear weapons.

26. Ms SABORÍO DE ROCAFORT (Costa Rica) hoped that, as a result of the continued growth in the number of Member States from the Caribbean, greater attention would be accorded to the Agency's activities in the area of technical cooperation, among others, that involved States in Latin America and the Caribbean. She also called on the Agency to ensure that its staff was fully representative of its growing membership with regard to gender and nationality.

27. Costa Rica thanked the Director General for his efforts to enhance the role played by the Agency in attaining the SDGs and for the support that he had given to developing Member States in that regard, which would undoubtedly remain a priority during his third term. She reiterated her country's support and cooperation for the Agency's efforts to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

28. Costa Rica supported the Agency's efforts to meet its obligations concerning the application of safeguards and the conduct of other nuclear verification activities, which were essential to the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the stability and sustainability of which were closely linked to the integrity, impartiality and technical objectivity of the safeguards system.

29. Costa Rica was paying close attention to the implementation of the JCPOA, as the restoration of the international community's confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme was crucial to international stability, peace and security. It welcomed the monitoring and verification activities that had been conducted thus far and encouraged Iran to continue to meet its obligations under the JCPOA. It also called on all other parties to the JCPOA to respect the spirit and letter of the agreement. The Agency played a central role in the implementation of those measures and Costa Rica therefore offered the Agency its full support.

30. Over 70 years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and following the conduct of thousands of nuclear tests, the United Nations had finally adopted a binding legal instrument — the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons — that categorically prohibited the most lethal and indiscriminate type of weapon of mass destruction. After more than two decades of paralysis in the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, the Treaty represented a significant step forward in the approach taken by the international community to confront the greatest global threat to life that humans had ever faced. The existence of some 15 000 nuclear warheads with a combined destructive power capable of destroying the planet several times over served as a reminder of humankind's vulnerability. The prohibition and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons was the only way of ensuring that they were never again put to use. In prohibiting nuclear weapons — the only category of weapon of mass destruction that was not banned worldwide — the Treaty followed in the footsteps of the existing conventions against biological and chemical weapons.

31. Although the determination of the DPRK to develop a nuclear weapon capacity was alarming, it also served to stiffen the resolve of the international community to ban nuclear weapons. Weapons of mass destruction did nothing to improve national or international security; rather, they posed a deadly threat to all peoples and there was no place for them in the international framework of the 21st century and beyond. By adopting the Treaty, the UN had demonstrated its conviction that any use of nuclear weapons, on any grounds, was incompatible with the dictates of public conscience and the principles of international humanitarian law.

32. The Treaty was compatible with the NPT and it bolstered the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including the Agency's safeguards system, the treaties establishing NWFZs and the CTBT. Its adoption could not be ignored; with time, the Treaty would likely have a significant impact on the activities of the Agency itself.

33. The Treaty provided a way for States that possessed or hosted nuclear weapons to come together through a process of verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. The sponsors' ambitions for world peace and security were tempered, however, by the need to proceed with care. The Treaty took into account the complexities of the situation, including those related to verification, and, rather than attempting to lay out all the details of the disarmament process in advance, provided for arrangements to be agreed upon following the accession of the nuclear-weapon States.

34. Delay was not an option in the current international security environment. By adopting the Treaty, the overwhelming majority of UN Member States and observers had sent a powerful message that all States needed to work quickly to eliminate nuclear weapons and create a safer world. Costa Rica therefore called on all States to sign and ratify the Treaty.

35. Ms GIRÓN SIERRA (Honduras) commended the Agency on its contribution to international peace and security through the peaceful use of nuclear applications, which had made a tangible difference to millions of lives, and in particular on its continued contribution to Member States' development through the TC programme. Honduras acknowledged the support that it had received to date regarding the use of nuclear technology for the development of the Honduran health programme, in particular with regard to cancer treatment, laboratory equipment for early detection, fruit fly control, the application of isotope techniques to identify subterranean water reserves and measure pollutant levels, radiological security and protection, training and the transfer of knowledge regarding the appropriate use of nuclear technology.

36. Honduras had made progress towards meeting the conditions for technical cooperation, in particular with regard to strengthening its regulatory authority and improving cancer treatment. In May 2017, Honduras had signed a CPF, which would enable it to plan its programmes taking into account its national priorities and the SDGs.

37. Honduras was committed to working with the Agency to implement the existing programmes and agreements that guaranteed nuclear security and ensured the application of international instruments. With the Agency's support, Honduras was working to strengthen and uphold nuclear security through inspections, licensing requirements and the education of primary users and national authorities. By demonstrating the importance of a national security programme, Honduras hoped to be able to boost the role of its national regulatory authority and establish a national nuclear energy commission. Honduras was committed to applying nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in support of national development.

38. She restated her country's interest in continuing its collaboration with ARCAL with a view to promoting the exchange of methods and knowledge and thereby expanding the use of nuclear technology in the region.

39. Honduras remained faithful to the letter and spirit of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty) and therefore remained committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

40. Expressing concern regarding recent nuclear tests elsewhere in the world, Honduras called for the revision and application of all relevant international agreements in order to prevent all nuclear activity that threatened global security. At the same time, Honduras was pleased that more and more States were acknowledging the peaceful uses and applications of nuclear technology and it commended the Agency on its contributions to that end.

41. Ms ABUSALAH (Libya) said that the Agency played a vital role in promoting the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and, in particular, for sustainable development. All Member States should support that role by promoting the TC programme. Libya sought to reap the benefits of the programme under its diverse development projects, in particular those designed to meet the population's daily needs. The Agency's assistance to Member States in building their capacity to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes was of great importance for their socioeconomic development.

42. Libya was currently preparing its CPF for 2018–2022 and would shortly submit a copy thereof to the Agency. The CPF identified the country's priority development needs that required support under the TC programme. Lessons learned from previous cooperation with the Agency had been taken into account. Libya had ambitions in specific project areas and hoped to benefit from the Agency's expertise in that regard.

43. Libya had submitted proposals for eight projects for the period 2018–2019, two of which had been approved by the Agency. One concerned radioactive waste management and the other radiation therapy for the treatment of cancer. Libya hoped that it would receive the Agency's assistance in purchasing the necessary equipment for radiation therapy.

44. Libya had submitted a footnote-a/ project for the period 2017–2018 concerning PET scanning for cancer. It was currently seeking possible funding sources, along with Agency assistance in developing the requisite strategy. Libya, for its part, would strive to meet all demands despite facing economic and security constraints that had undermined its ability to implement national projects and economic development programmes.

45. Libya attached great importance to the safeguards regime as a key guarantor of international safety, security and peace. It encouraged the Agency to intensify its efforts to convince States that had not signed the NPT to accede to the Treaty and place all their nuclear installations under Agency safeguards. Israel, which persistently refused to accede to the NPT and to permit inspections of its nuclear facilities, was the only country in the Middle East that possessed nuclear weapons and was not

a party to the NPT. The project to create an NWFZ in the region thus continued to be impeded by Israeli obstinacy, which gave rise to persistent tensions. The Agency and the world as a whole bore direct responsibility for that extraordinary and unacceptable situation. More determined action must be taken to establish a genuine and effective safeguards regime in the region.

46. Libya commended the Agency's key role in laying the foundations for peace and security in the world through its safeguards regime and in promoting the use of nuclear energy to further science and development.

47. Ms OMAR (Kuwait) said that Kuwait had cooperated with the Agency's various departments in building its national capacities and institutions to enable it to make use of nuclear energy and carry out important social and economic development projects. To that end, Kuwait would benefit from additional consultations with the Agency and from increased cooperation between the Agency and its national institutions.

48. As part of Kuwait's support for scientific and development projects and initiatives in developing countries, it had announced the 2015 and 2016 laureates of the award for the best research and initiatives in the areas of health, nutrition and education in Africa at the 2016 Arab–African Summit.

49. Kuwait had contributed to the establishment of the LEU Bank in Kazakhstan, as it supported the right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to obtain the materials required to that end.

50. Kuwait had always accorded special attention to TC activities and appreciated, in particular, the efforts made by the Department of Technical Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and the various workshops and regional training courses that the department had held in cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, which had had a marked impact on various sectors in Kuwait. Eleven projects were currently being implemented in various fields during the 2016–2018 period. In that connection, Kuwait welcomed the International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, held earlier in 2017 and urged the Agency to continue to hold high-level meetings on that topic.

51. Kuwait continued to cooperate with the Agency in the area of nuclear security under the framework of its INSSP, the implementation of which was contributing significantly to strengthening the country's institutional, human and technical capacities in various areas, including the surveillance and protection of radioactive sources, the development of a national response plan, border control and the prevention of illicit trafficking. In that connection, Kuwait had hosted an Agency mission to assess its INSSP in May 2017.

52. Kuwait condemned in the strongest terms all acts that put the safety of other persons at risk or that undermined international safety or security. In that connection, Kuwait condemned all the nuclear tests carried out by the DPRK and it called on that country to implement all related international conventions and decisions of the UN Security Council. For its part, Kuwait had taken numerous steps to meet its obligations pursuant to the decisions of the Security Council issued in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter concerning the sanctions to be imposed on the DPRK.

53. While affirming the right of all States to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the NPT, Kuwait called on Iran to continue to cooperate with the Agency in a fully transparent manner and to ratify and implement the additional protocol, thereby enabling the Agency to give credible assurances that there were no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran.

54. Kuwait set great store by expanding the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear facilities in the Middle East. In that connection, it regretted that, despite the commitment of all States in the region to enforcing the NPT and implementing CSA measures and systems, Israel continued to refuse to sign the NPT or to place its facilities under the Agency's safeguards system, despite its possession of advanced research reactors which were known to be used to produce nuclear weapons that threatened regional security. Israel's position posed a fundamental obstacle to the efforts to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East and imperilled regional and, consequently, international security and stability.

55. Kuwait reaffirmed its continuing support for the pioneering role played by the Agency in promoting sustainable development in many States by helping them to confront economic and food crises and the effects of climate change and to make optimal use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes in the quest for peace, security, safety and prosperity for all the peoples of the world.

56. Ms LLESHI (Albania), aligning her country with the statement made by the European Union, conveyed its full support for the Agency's work in maintaining and strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system and joined the call for the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards agreement and its additional protocols.

57. The Agency's verification of the DPRK's nuclear programme remained critical, particularly in view of the country's clear and systematic violations of UN Security Council resolutions. Albania reiterated the urgent need for the General Conference to issue a strong resolution regarding the DPRK.

58. Albania endorsed the Annual Report for 2016, which documented the considerable progress that the Agency had made in all fields of its mandated activities, and noted with appreciation the contribution that the Agency had made to several development sectors in Albania, including human health, the environment, agriculture and the strengthening of regulatory authorities.

59. The International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty Years and Beyond — Contributing to Development, held earlier in 2017, had highlighted once again the Agency's singular role in promoting the responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Albania had made regular contributions on time and in full to the TCF and encouraged all Member States to do the same in order to ensure sustained and predictable resources for the Agency to be used to the benefit of its Member States.

60. Albania looked forward to concluding its new CPF with the Agency. It welcomed the topic of the 2016 Scientific Forum, "Nuclear Techniques in Human Health: Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment". The fight against cancer remained high on the Albanian Government's agenda and its comprehensive national cancer control programme had already significantly improved the quality and safety of diagnostic and therapeutic cancer services. The Mother Teresa Hospital in Tirana now had a modern radiotherapy centre that provided radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services and was growing into a centre of excellence for the country. Albania stood ready to share its experience and to continue to serve as a model demonstration site for PACT. The Agency's support had been pivotal, not only to the commissioning of a second state-of-the-art linear accelerator to be installed later in 2017, but also through its continued focus on human capacity building.

61. Albania welcomed the adoption of the Nuclear Security Plan for the period 2018–2021 and valued the Agency's continuous support in strengthening its national nuclear security regime and improving the radioactive monitoring capacities of the country. The Albanian Government was fully committed to strengthening international cooperation on nuclear security in order to ensure effective prevention, detection, delay and response regarding the security of radioactive materials. Albania had reviewed, approved and begun implementing its INSSP. Standard operating procedures for the

customs service had been prepared and an adequate regulatory framework aligned with international standards was in place.

62. Half of the ministers in the newly formed Government of Albania were women. Albania valued the Director General's commitment to increasing the representation of women in Agency programmes and operations, noted with approval that the proportion of women in the Professional and higher categories was at a historic high of 29.4% and looked forward to the strengthening of the Agency's gender equality policy.

63. Ms MOLOKOMME (Botswana) said that she was honoured to address the General Conference, in particular following the election of a woman President, which marked an important milestone for the Agency and the UN system in their progress towards greater gender equality. She highlighted the need to expedite progress towards greater participation by women in global public affairs.

64. The Agency played an important role in promoting and facilitating cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and was the sole internationally recognized authority responsible for verifying non-diversion. It was therefore the Member States' collective responsibility to comply with safeguards agreements rather than undermine them by pursuing narrow and selfish agendas that made the world an unsafe place.

65. Botswana was fully committed to the Agency's ideals and objectives and therefore continued to honour its financial obligations to the Agency. Her country hoped that its modest financial contribution would contribute to the effective and successful implementation of the Agency's mandate.

66. Botswana acknowledged the contribution of the TCF, which had been a driving force in the use of nuclear technology for development. Her country noted the impact of technology transfer in areas such as crop production, animal health, energy studies, waste management and environment monitoring. Aware of the financial limitations of the technical cooperation programme, Botswana encouraged Member States to contribute voluntarily to the TCF to ensure the Fund's sustainability.

67. Botswana's new CPF for 2017–2022 had been developed with the aim of maintaining its technical cooperation with the Agency and had been aligned with the recently adopted National Development Plan 11 and the Vision 2036 strategy to ensure harmony with national goals for sustainable development and increased impact.

68. Botswana was participating in AFRA projects, the immense benefits of which could be seen in agriculture, human health, water resources, food and nutrition. Like many other African States, Botswana needed support and assistance for the acquisition, adaptation and use of appropriate nuclear technologies, tools that would catalyse economic development and contribute to national poverty reduction and the country's Vision 2036. Botswana's aim in establishing multilateral relations was to benefit from the experience of others and to ensure the optimal use of available resources. Key areas of collaboration included nuclear safety and security, uranium mining and milling, food safety and security, public health, animal health, nutrition and research and development.

69. One of the recent highlights of Botswana's partnership with the Agency was human resource development in a project on the control of transboundary animal diseases, which had resulted in the designation of the Botswana National Veterinary Laboratory as the World Organisation for Animal Health reference laboratory for contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP). Previously, the Laboratory had dealt with transboundary animal diseases using conventional disease diagnostic methods. The Joint FAO/IAEA Division had assisted the Laboratory in developing and adopting modern molecular techniques in order to speed up diagnosis and establish methods for early warning, prevention and control of other infection diseases.

70. Botswana was pleased to be exhibiting for the first time at the General Conference, with a focus on demonstrating how the use of nuclear technology had benefited the country thanks to the Agency's technical cooperation.

71. In the health sector, the teaching hospital where a radiotherapy centre would be established had been completed, giving hope that a sustainable, cost-saving and convenient solution for cancer treatment was within reach.

72. Botswana was looking forward to the IRRS mission in October 2017, the preparations for which were at an advanced stage. The mission would help to evaluate the current status of compliance of the governmental, legal and regulatory infrastructure for safety with Agency standards and enhance the effectiveness of the national infrastructure for safety. Botswana was committed to implementing the recommendations and any suggestions for improvement. In addition, the mission would identify any good practices which would be of great value to Botswana and which it could use for leverage.

73. The importance of a global approach to nuclear security could not be overemphasized. New types of terrorist attacks were emerging in which the perpetrators were targeting public places. As part of the implementation of the Agency's international security plans, Botswana was at an advanced stage of developing a threat and risk assessment in order to put threat-mitigating strategies in place.

74. Botswana emphasized the importance of the Agency's safeguards system and its continuous reinforcement and encouraged Member States to conclude CSAs and an additional protocol. Her country reiterated its sincere gratitude to the Agency for its continued support and assistance to ensure that Botswana benefited from the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. It remained committed to the realization of the Agency's ideals and urged other countries to continue working together in their joint endeavour to achieve a safe and better world for all.

75. Mr OSIPOV (Republic of Moldova) reiterated his country's firm support of the full, complete and effective implementation of the NPT, which was the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and key to the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty. His country strongly supported the application of safeguards in the Middle East as a strategical instrument for peace and stability.

76. Moldova condemned the DPRK's recent nuclear tests, which were in dangerous violation of international norms against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and threatened the region's security. His country urged the DPRK authorities to relinquish its nuclear weapon policy and to engage in credible political dialogue with the international community.

77. Moldova welcomed the entry into force of the Amendment to the CPPNM. The National Regulation on Physical Protection of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials, approved by the Moldovan Government in 2016, aimed to bring the national framework into full compliance with the Agency's recommendations for the physical protection of nuclear material and nuclear facilities (INFCIRC/225/Rev.5). It also implemented requirements and obligations above and beyond the amended CPPNM, representing an important step towards ensuring a high level of national and regional nuclear security.

78. Moldova had increased its capacity to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials by establishing a national nuclear forensics laboratory to analyse seized nuclear and radioactive material. The laboratory was part of a regional network with the country's neighbouring partners.

79. Under the TC programme, Moldova had collaborated with the Agency to identify priority areas, support national development goals and complete the next CPF. They had also worked together to build the capacity of national health institutions to implement new technologies in nuclear medicine,

radiodiagnosis, radiotherapy and cancer control and prevention. He noted that many professionals in the field had benefited from PACT, whose benefits had also been disseminated through training programmes under regional TC projects.

80. Moldova was grateful to the Agency for its support in implementing projects to strengthen the safety and security of radioactive waste. In that context, he reported that the Moldovan Government had approved a national strategy on radioactive waste management, with an action plan for the subsequent ten years.

81. Stressing the importance of bilateral relations in improving international cooperation, he drew attention to the agreement signed between the Moldovan National Agency for Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities and the Department of Defense of the USA concerning cooperation in border security assistance and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. His country had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine on cooperation in the fields of radiation and nuclear safety and security.

82. In closing, he conveyed his country's gratitude to the Agency, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority for supporting Moldova's education and training efforts in that area.

83. Mr AL-KHAIRALLA (Iraq) said that his country was making significant progress in its efforts to overcome terrorist strongholds and to regain its lost territory. In that regard, it had recently liberated Ninawa Governorate from ISIL terrorist gangs and, despite the major challenges that it faced, was assessing the status of facilities in recaptured areas in order to check for hazardous materials, including, in particular, radiological material and sources.

84. Iraq had recently signed a CPF for 2018–2023, which would regulate cooperation between it and the Agency. Iraq had also promulgated Act No. 43 of 2016 on the Iraqi Nuclear Energy Agency and was taking the necessary steps to establish that body, which would regulate the country's nuclear and radiological activities. In addition, it was merging its three nuclear oversight authorities into a single body, which would be known as the National Nuclear and Radiological Oversight Authority, and was taking the necessary legislative steps in that regard. Iraq had also adopted a national radiological waste management strategy, which had been reviewed by the Agency prior to its adoption. Iraq was taking urgent action to dispose safely of radiological waste from decommissioned destroyed nuclear sites and of material produced by medical, industrial and oil facilities.

85. Iraq was boosting its capacity to protect radiological materials and facilities, to ensure information security and to conduct nuclear forensics. Furthermore, the site selection study and the necessary design and planning for the construction of permanent underground storage facilities for radiological sources and waste in Iraq had been awarded to a European corporation, which, with EU support, had already begun its work to that end.

86. The elimination of nuclear weapons and other WMDs from the Middle East was crucial to the achievement of regional security and stability. It was vital, therefore, to continue efforts to convene the conference on the establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East, pursuant to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and in accordance with the terms of reference set forth in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, which would have a positive political and security impact in the region. Israel, alone in the region, had refused to accede to the NPT, subject its nuclear installations to Agency safeguards or conclude an additional protocol, and outstanding questions still needed to be answered regarding those nuclear installations, which had the potential to cause an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe in that part of the world.

87. Iraq considered that all States, including, in particular, developing States, had an inalienable right to develop nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes in furtherance of their development, without let or hindrance by a particular group or imposition of mandatory, international conditions prejudicial to a State's interests.

88. Mr UNGEHEUER (Luxembourg) stressed that his country opposed the promotion of nuclear energy and did not see it as a viable option for countering the effects of greenhouse gases or for contributing to achievement of the SDGs. In terms of cost, nuclear electricity was becoming less and less competitive, in particular in view of the development of renewable energies, and Luxembourg called for all associated costs, such as infrastructure and waste management, to be included within the cost of nuclear electricity. His country therefore supported those campaigning for the gradual elimination of nuclear energy production worldwide alongside increased efforts to use renewable forms of energy to their full potential and to improve energy saving and efficiency.

89. Luxembourg's own long-term energy production plans were focused in that direction and the country therefore welcomed the choice that certain States had made to abandon nuclear energy and embrace renewable sources. As for those States that had opted for nuclear energy, Luxembourg urged them to build, operate, update and decommission their plants in strict adherence with all relevant international conventions and applicable safety and security standards, in particular the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, to consider the interests and concerns of their neighbouring countries, to be open to dialogue and transparent public communication and to share their operational experience. Luxembourg reaffirmed its opposition to calls to create a single global nuclear civil liability regime as the planned levels of compensation for potential nuclear accidents were too low.

90. Ageing nuclear power plants and the renewal of their licences continued to pose major risks. In that regard, Luxembourg had benefited from the advice of highly professional Agency experts and training on its safeguards agreements and nuclear safety and security and encouraged the Director General to continue the Agency's efforts to improve nuclear safety, including in the light of States' commitments under the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety.

91. His country welcomed the Agency's role as a global platform for improving nuclear security and supported efforts to maintain nuclear security standards, but was concerned at the threat of unauthorized access to radioactive and nuclear sources. The entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM was a crucial development in the fight against nuclear terrorism. Luxembourg urged all States that had not yet done so to become party to the modified Convention and those that had already done so to apply its provisions to the full. Efforts to confront terrorist threats and cybercrime would be considerably facilitated by closing gaps in the international legal framework on nuclear security. Luxembourg welcomed the results and conclusions of the International Conference on Nuclear Security, convened by the Agency in December 2016. It had participated in the APEX Europa exercise at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Karlsruhe and would participate again in the 2017 workshop.

92. The Agency's verification expertise was essential to upholding the provisions of the NPT, in particular those in Article III. Luxembourg firmly supported the idea of developing the safeguards system and implementing the State-level concept. Given the future challenge of verifying more facilities, equipment and information with a budget that Member States were reluctant to increase, the Agency's resources must be optimized and its actions focused on the most sensitive areas.

93. Luxembourg, a long-standing donor, was pleased to announce that it would be contributing to the TC programme in 2018.

94. The JCPOA was a significant accomplishment for international nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Since its entry into force in 2016, the JCPOA had significantly reduced the risk posed by the Iranian nuclear programme and had mandated unprecedented follow-up and transparency measures. Luxembourg firmly supported efforts to monitor and uphold the JCPOA, expressed its satisfaction with the Agency's conclusions presented in the Director General's report and called upon all parties to the agreement to respect and fully implement its provisions.

95. Luxembourg condemned the DPRK's sixth nuclear test and underscored the role that the Agency could play in verifying its nuclear programme. The DPRK must respect all its international obligations, conform with UN Security Council resolutions, adhere to the NPT and implement a safeguards agreement with the Agency. Luxembourg supported a diplomatic approach to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and called upon all parties involved to refrain from any action that could heighten tensions in the region.

96. Luxembourg fully supported peace and stability in the Middle East and was still deeply concerned by the lack of cooperation by Syria and of progress on longstanding issues relating to Dair Alzour and three other sites. His country reaffirmed its full support for the creation of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as agreed upon in the 2010 Action Plan.

97. Luxembourg was strongly committed to creating a world free from nuclear weapons but believed that the recently adopted Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was not the correct avenue to realization of that goal. In Luxembourg's view, the NPT, which provided a credible and step-by-step process that would promote international stability, was the only binding commitment for nuclear disarmament and Luxembourg did not support any measures that might weaken it. Luxembourg recalled that the Agency was a technical organization and, in order to fulfil its role as provider of robust assurances against nuclear proliferation, must be able to work impartially, independently and objectively. All temptation to politicize the Agency's work must therefore be resisted.

98. Mr CASTELLANOS LOPEZ (Guatemala) expressed his country's solidarity with the people and Government of Mexico following the earthquake that had occurred the previous day and with all countries that had been affected by the recent hurricanes.

99. He commended the President on being the third woman in the Agency's history to hold the position and agreed with the need for the Agency to address the gender imbalance among its staff.

100. Although Guatemala was proud to be part of a region that was free from nuclear weapons, the benefits provided by the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes could not be denied. The Agency's TC activities had had a very positive impact on Guatemala, in particular in the areas of health, energy, mining, climate change, agriculture and food. All projects had been carried out in line with nuclear safety norms, in a responsible and transparent manner and in strict accordance with Guatemala's safeguards agreement. The Agency's work to promote the use of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes was essential, as such applications contributed significantly to national development. The work of ARCAL had also brought many benefits to the region.

101. Through the MOSCAMED programme, the Agency was working with Guatemala to run a laboratory for the sterilization of fruit flies in El Pino Lake. The laboratory had excess capacity that could, with the right technology, be used to sterilize mosquitos, the main vectors of the Zika virus, dengue and malaria.

102. The international community had a responsibility to work together to preserve international peace and security. Nuclear security was therefore essential to prevent the theft of, unauthorized access to and illicit trade in nuclear and radioactive materials. Guatemala appreciated the opportunity

that the Agency provided for States to exchange ideas in a transparent and inclusive manner. Member States needed to be aware, however, that any operative error or accident in the field of nuclear security would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences; in such circumstances, it would matter little whether the State in question was a nuclear power or not.

103. Guatemala accorded great importance to bilateral and multilateral training at national level regarding emergency preparedness, the use of detection equipment and mitigation techniques for all forms of radiological emergency. Nonetheless, nuclear security was not a statutory part of the Agency's mandate and States should not, therefore, attempt to use funds from the Regular Budget for those purposes, in particular as it remained unclear whether such activities had a prejudicial effect on other programmes, including in the area of technical cooperation.

104. Guatemala highlighted the validity of the norms set out in the NPT and the obligations that that Treaty placed on States. Guatemala was making efforts to promote the universalization of the NPT and ensure full compliance with all the provisions set out therein. States party to the NPT had a legal obligation to comply with it and to demonstrate that they were committed to it in spirit and letter.

105. Guatemala continued to support the CTBT. It was essential that the moratorium on nuclear tests be extended until the CTBT had been brought into force.

106. The DPRK continued to ignore the responsibility and obligation vested in every State to protect nuclear security. It was a matter of deep concern that more than 80% of the most sensitive materials to be found in the world consisted of nuclear material used specifically for military purposes. Guatemala condemned the nuclear tests carried out by the DPRK, as they could have catastrophic consequences for humankind. The only effective way of ensuring that humankind was never again placed in such a dangerous position was to proceed towards the complete prohibition and elimination of all nuclear weapons. The existence of double standards regarding which States had the right to possess nuclear weapons was unacceptable: States needed to work together in a harmonious and responsible manner to build a safer, more peaceful world for all.

107. Guatemala was scheduled to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons later that same day. At last, the UN had adopted a legally binding instrument that categorically prohibited the most deadly and indiscriminate category of weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty inspired hope and put an end to the rhetoric designed to make States acknowledge quantitative reductions that, with the creation of more powerful and far-reaching weapons, were in fact qualitative increases. Guatemala supported the Agency's professional and independent work to ensure that nuclear energy was used exclusively to promote peace and development.

108. Mr LWIN (Myanmar) said that the Agency's TC programme had played a leading role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear science and technologies in Myanmar. His country had signed a second CPF with the Agency for 2016–2020, which was in line with the policy priorities of the country's national development plan. It would promote the use of radiation-based facilities and related expertise that had been built in Myanmar to foster social and economic development and integrate nuclear techniques into the national development plan. Myanmar had deposited its instrument of acceptance of the 2017 RCA. It expressed gratitude to the Agency for the assistance provided through national and regional TC projects.

109. Myanmar had signed the CNS and the CPPNM along with its Amendment in 2016. His country had submitted its first CNS National Report to the Agency in March 2017 and fully supported the Code of Conduct on Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Myanmar had been studying the international standards and requirements for ensuring adequate physical protection of nuclear and radioactive materials and facilities, the transport of such materials and the safety of radiation resources, radioactive isotopes and radioactive wastes. It was also continuing its efforts to develop

human resources in national radiation safety infrastructure, the regulatory framework, emergency planning and response preparedness and all other relevant thematic safety areas designated by the Agency.

110. Myanmar highly valued the Agency's role and efforts in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, which were essential to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The Agency's verification regime would continue to play a vital role in providing assurances to the international community that all nuclear materials and facilities were engaged in peaceful activities. Myanmar advocated a world free of nuclear weapons and recognized that NWFZs were effective measures for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Myanmar was a State Party to the NPT, had acceded to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and, in 2016, had ratified the CTBT. Myanmar was also a State Party to the safeguards agreement and had concluded an SQP. The country had signed an additional protocol in 2013 and would notify the Agency of its entry into force in Myanmar when preparedness reached a satisfactory level.

111. Mr ESTRADA ROMÁN (Nicaragua) expressed his country's solidarity with and support for Mexico and the Caribbean, which were suffering from the impact of natural disasters.

112. The Nicaraguan Government was particularly focused on technical cooperation, nuclear security and safeguards with the aim of continuing to benefit from the exclusively peaceful benefits of nuclear applications. At the same time, Nicaragua recognized the dangers and risk of the malevolent use of nuclear materials, which could damage the environment, human life and personal security, and therefore remained committed to preventing nuclear crime and terrorism.

113. In an increasingly complex world, the international community had to ensure that nuclear technology was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Agency played a key role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The plan for an NWFZ in the Middle East had yet to be realized and was contingent upon the Agency's support.

114. Noting that the Nicaraguan population was benefiting from the Agency's support in terms of quality of life, development and security, he conveyed his country's request that the Agency continue supporting Nicaragua's objectives. In that context, he drew attention to the successful TC programme conducted between the Agency and various governmental institutions.

115. Mr THONGSNA (Lao People's Democratic Republic) reaffirmed his country's support for the Agency's activities and its recognition of the Agency's tremendous achievements and central role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

116. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic attached great importance to nuclear safety and security and had made concerted efforts to develop its infrastructure in that area. In 2014, an International Nuclear Security Advisory Service mission had conducted a review of the nuclear safety and security measures in the country, with a view to improving the national safety and security system. A recent consultation workshop in Vientiane on formulating an INSSP had resulted in a draft Plan. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was currently in the process of drafting a national law on radiation and nuclear safety, which would be finalized and submitted to the National Assembly for consideration and approval by the end of 2018.

117. His country thanked the Agency for organizing the workshop for front line officers and looked forward to similar workshops in the future, which would involve the participation of such professions as customs and police officers.

118. The Lao People's Democratic Republic underscored the importance of the Agency's nuclear science and technology applications, largely delivered through the TC programme, as they would contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the national development plans of its Member States.

He thanked the Agency for the benefits that it had provided for his country through training, workshops and TC project implementation in various areas, including capacity building and knowledge management, radiation safety and security infrastructure, human health, water and environment, agriculture and food safety and security.

119. As an active member of ASEAN and the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), the Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterated its strong commitment to the implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.

120. Mr ALHAJERI (Bahrain) said that, as Bahrain was all too well aware, the world's lofty humanitarian goals had not yet been fully achieved. The country was sustained, however, by the hope that a war-free era would be inaugurated. No sooner had one war in the region come to an end than another broke out. Action to address such challenges was by no means easy. It was a long and harsh procedure requiring determination, persistence and joint action to surmount the many difficulties.

121. Bahrain looked forward to increased exchanges of expertise and nuclear technology between industrial and developing countries. It encouraged peaceful uses of nuclear energy in order to enhance safety and security, promote science and technology, and ensure the implementation of safeguards.

122. The Agency's role in implementing safeguards enhanced mutual trust in the Middle East and promoted initiatives aimed at creating an NWFZ in the region. WMDs constituted a pernicious threat to humankind and to international peace and security. It was therefore essential to compel Israel to implement relevant international resolutions, to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards.

123. While Bahrain supported the right of all countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it called on Iran to cooperate more closely with the Agency, and it hoped for further progress in implementing the JCPOA in the interests of economic development, the advancement of Iranian society and stability in the region. Bahrain underscored the need for a joint global strategy to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other WMDs by means of a global and regional disarmament mechanism, particularly in the Middle East.

124. Bahrain had finalized its CPF and would sign it shortly with the Agency. TC projects had enabled the country to train national experts in using the regulatory and supervisory authority's information system to manage and monitor occupational radiation exposure, establish a national registry to monitor such exposure, and build national radiation and nuclear emergency preparedness and response capacities along with radio-analytical capabilities. Bahrain had five plants that monitored radioactive pollution, one of which was based in Kuwait as part of a joint Gulf project.

125. Bahrain had submitted its report on the SQP that it had concluded with the Agency for the period from 2009 to 2016. It had also submitted its 2017 report on the CNS. An Agency committee had visited the oncology section of the Salmaniya Medical Complex to assess the radiotherapy treatment service and also the preparedness and safety of the medical equipment and personnel. A Bahraini delegation had visited Malaysia in August 2017, in cooperation with the Agency, in order to understudy from that country's nuclear security plan. Bahrain had also participated in the Regional Training Course on Security of Radioactive Material in Transport, held in the Philippines in October 2016.

126. Bahrain had attended the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS in Vienna from 27 March to 7 April 2017. Participants at the Meeting had reviewed Bahrain's national report on measures taken by the competent authorities to implement the Convention, including legislation and decisions on radiation protection, the status of the INSSP, cooperation among the Gulf countries, and the role of the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons of Mass Destruction

in implementing the provisions of the Convention. The review had met with a positive response from all participants.

127. Bahrain was currently raising awareness and building a nuclear safety culture among citizens and residents by disseminating information through audio-visual media, social media and websites. It also produced educational films and guidance booklets and held seminars and lectures for the purpose. Material on nuclear safety and security had also been introduced into educational curricula with a view to raising the awareness of future generations.

128. Bahrain hoped that Member States at the General Conference would achieve the common goal of harnessing nuclear energy in the service of peace, redouble efforts to preserve the environment and help to achieve peoples' aspirations for development, security and peace.

129. Mr SENOUSI (Chad) reaffirmed Chad's commitment to the promotion of radiation safety and nuclear security in accordance with international safety standards, as the instruments of choice for gradually applying safety standards at all levels, and called for the operator peer review mechanism to be strengthened. Chad fully supported the Agency's objectives, in particular the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful uses and the application of safeguards, nuclear security and radiation safety standards, and had therefore endeavoured to promote the peaceful use of nuclear techniques and technologies and to strengthen the international legal framework. It was committed to working in solidarity and complete synergy with all Member States in order to establish a peaceful and secure world free of all weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen the radiation safety and nuclear security regimes. It had accordingly cooperated with all of the Agency's advisory missions.

130. Chad commended TC achievements in the field of human health, in particular cancer control, thanks to which its ministries of agriculture, environment and public health had been strengthened, capacities for sustainable groundwater resource management had been built and its radiation protection and nuclear security agency had been bolstered. Chad intended to use isotope techniques to study phenomena in the sandstone aquifer that it shared with Egypt, Libya and the Sudan and the aquifers of other Saharan Member States, in particular the Lake Chad Basin aquifer.

131. Chad intended to participate actively through AFRA in nuclear science and technology training, research and development, and had held national training workshops on the detection of sources of ionizing radiation moving across its borders, on the safe transport of radioactive substances and awareness raising among hospital and petroleum company directors in order to establish a genuine culture of radiation safety and nuclear security.

132. Chad's CPF, which was currently being finalized, would be implemented appropriately and would contribute to the implementation of several current projects and to the formulation of relevant and beneficial TC projects.

133. Mr TAZARKI (Tunisia) said that his country, which had achieved its independence in 1956, was proud to have been one of the founding States of the Agency in 1957 and to have attended the first session of the General Conference. It had sought ever since to promote the Agency's independence, impartiality and professionalism and to ensure that it achieved the lofty aims for which it was founded.

134. Tunisia attached high strategic importance to energy and water security because of its limited sources of fossil fuels and safe drinking water. The option of harnessing nuclear power for electricity generation and seawater desalination therefore remained open. As to date Tunisia had been unable to implement that option, it was endeavouring in the meantime to establish the legal, regulatory and institutional infrastructure that would enable it to take a decision based on solid foundations that

complied with relevant international standards and conventions. Tunisia had also expanded the scope of its prospective cooperation by signing agreements with many partner countries.

135. From the outset, Tunisia had also sought to establish sustainable cooperative relations with the Agency. Important programmes and projects implemented in recent decades had strongly supported socioeconomic development in the areas of health, agriculture and industry. Notwithstanding the major economic and social challenges faced by the country, there had however been a marked decline in technical assistance in recent years. Tunisia wished to highlight that fact inasmuch as technical assistance and cooperation were key components of the Agency's mandate.

136. Tunisia's commitment to honouring its financial pledges matched its desire to seize opportunities for cooperation with the Agency. Accordingly, it undertook to pay its share of the Regular Budget, to meet its TCF pledge and to contribute to the costs of its TC projects.

137. Tunisia attached importance to scientific cooperation with partner States, in particular under the auspices of the AAEA, which had its headquarters in Tunisia. It appreciated the Agency's continued support for the AAEA, including through the Arab Network of Nuclear Regulators.

138. Tunisia was aware that access to the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology should entail, as a corollary, compliance with the provisions of the NPT, conclusion of a CSA and an additional protocol, accession to diverse relevant conventions and other legal instruments, such as the Agency's codes of conduct, and compliance with safety regulations and resolutions adopted by the General Conference and the Board of Governors.

139. Tunisia had continued to take constitutional steps to enact a framework law on peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, which provided for the establishment of a national regulatory authority to oversee all activities relating, in particular, to nuclear safety and security.

140. The progress achieved by the international community in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and enhancing the effectiveness of the safeguards regime would remain inadequate until it was combined with vigorous efforts to achieve genuine progress towards disarmament and the universality of the NPT, which constituted a basic prerequisite for building confidence and promoting peace of mind among all peoples of the world without exception.

141. While Tunisia appreciated existing efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, it reiterated its urgent appeal for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs in the Middle East and the placement of all nuclear installations under Agency safeguards, in particular those of Israel, which continued to threaten the security of the entire region.

142. Ms WIJESKERA (Sri Lanka) said that her country looked forward to the Director General's visit to Sri Lanka in March 2018, which would symbolize the continued cooperation between Sri Lanka and the Agency and would enhance cooperation on nuclear science and technology in Sri Lanka. Her country appreciated the Agency's work in 2016, which had focused on helping Member States to use nuclear and isotopic techniques to achieve the SDGs.

143. Her country highly valued the Agency's assistance on security matters to strengthen local infrastructure and was in the process of receiving Agency assistance on updating the INSSP for Sri Lanka, which had initially been developed in 2013. The plan had been updated collaboratively by stakeholder institutes in Sri Lanka and the Agency. Once finalized, its acceptance would be communicated to the Agency.

144. In addition, the establishment of national nuclear security support centres at the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board had been considered. Her country acknowledged the assistance provided by the Division of Nuclear Security assistance in training Sri Lankan officials, would appreciate further

training and expressed an interest in using its experts in other nuclear security mission as part of its work with the Agency.

145. Under its CSA, Sri Lanka had hosted the first mission of safeguards inspectors through its Atomic Energy Regulatory Council in August 2017, marking a significant achievement for the country in fulfilling its obligations. The country had taken a number of positive steps towards concluding an additional protocol. Sri Lanka appreciated the assistance from the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre in training officers of the Council in nuclear or radiological emergency response and planning.

146. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Council had created a legal framework to establish a new independent regulatory body in January 2015 in accordance with international requirements on radiation safety, security and safeguards, thus making significant improvements in those areas. The Council had established an inspection system and a programme on import and export control of source and source security to meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and Guidance on Import and Export of Radioactive Sources, which had been endorsed by Sri Lanka in January 2016.

147. Establishing a National Centre for Research, Training and Services in Medical and Molecular Entomology for Vector-borne Disease Control was one of the major projects being successfully implemented at the University of Kelaniya under the 2016–2017 TC cycle. It would assist in solving issues caused by vector-borne diseases. Sri Lanka was grateful to the Agency for its assistance in training a team member of the project. In the field of human health, the country was currently receiving assistance to improve its capacity to identify adolescents at risk of cardiovascular diseases and to intervene in order to prevent future nutrition-related diseases.

148. In addition, in support of Sri Lanka's poverty alleviation efforts, the TC programme was providing rural women dairy farmers with high-producing cattle in order to increase their livelihoods while conserving national dairy genetic resources. Sri Lanka was also receiving technical assistance to establish a national centre for nuclear agriculture and a national centre for marine applications in collaboration with national stakeholders, the Marine Environmental Prevention Authority and the National Aquatic Resource Authority. In addition, the Agency had provided technical assistance by arranging fellowship training at the Government-owned multipurpose gamma irradiation facility, which provided irradiation services for industrial products. More participants were expected at the facility in future.

149. Sri Lanka noted the Agency's progress in the use of isotope hydrology for water resources management, PACT and approaches to supporting the development of nuclear power infrastructure, programmes that were highly beneficial for countries facing difficulties in those areas.

150. Sri Lanka had requested that the Agency designate the National Centre for Non-Destructive Testing and the Sri Lanka Gamma Centre as regional resource centres and hoped that the corresponding decisions would be taken soon.

151. Sri Lanka looked forward to receiving technical assistance in the 2018–2019 TC cycle, in particular with its project to establish a nuclear medicine unit, in the form of a radioimmunoassay laboratory, at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Jaffna to the great benefit of those living in the area, which had been blighted by the conflict in the country. One of five national projects to be implemented under the next TC cycle was the combined use of isotopic and chemical techniques to resolve the fate of contaminants in hydro-geological systems. Sri Lanka requested that the Agency help to address chronic kidney disease, which was rapidly spreading across parts of the country and represented an urgent priority for the health and water management sectors. Sri Lanka also requested the Agency's support in establishing a cyclotron-based radiopharmaceutical production facility.

152. Mr HAIDARA (Mali) said that his country had been working with the Agency as part of ECOWAS and the AU since becoming a Member State in 1961.

153. Mali called upon Member States to support the Agency in order to tackle global challenges such as nuclear arms proliferation, a threat against which Africa had already taken action through the Pelindaba Treaty, which the majority of its States had signed. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) had been established following the first conference of the States party to the Pelindaba Treaty. Mali welcomed the Agency's efforts in the application of safeguards agreements and called for the unwavering commitment of all countries to strictly adhere to the provisions of the NPT and the ban on nuclear testing.

154. Mali also welcomed the positive effects of the TC programme on key economic and scientific research areas: radiological safety and security, human and animal health, agriculture, food and water resources management. The Government of Mali particularly valued the Agency's technical assistance, thanks to which the country was now equipped with a national authority to monitor and regulate the different uses of nuclear within the country; a nuclear medicine service at Point G Hospital; an operational radiotherapy service at Mali Hospital from April 2014; and equipment at several laboratories for measuring, research and diagnosis. A new CPF had just been initiated for the years 2017–2019, under which Mali had undertaken four new projects in human health, animal health, agriculture and nuclear and radiological safety and security.

155. On behalf of the President of Mali, he thanked the Agency, especially the Division of Nuclear Security, for its support in organizing the 27th Africa–France Summit in Bamako on 13 and 14 January 2017.

156. Mali drew a parallel between the nuclear balance, which had been frequently condemned by Member States, and the unhappy dispensation known in the Cold War as the 'balance of terror', or the supposedly responsible possession of nuclear weapons.

157. The signing of the peace agreements from the Algiers Process had given rise to extensive institutional and political reform to consolidate national unity, guarantee a secular State and strengthen the Republic. With the support of the French Operation Barkhan and MINUSMA, the Malian armed forces were maintaining a security barrier at great cost between the civilized world and the terrorist groups Al-Qaida and ISIL, which were trading in drugs and weapons. Mali sounded a grave warning about the danger of allowing nuclear materials to fall into the hands of terrorists.

158. The heads of government of Burkina Faso, Chad, France, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger had met at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly to discuss the operationalization of the newly formed Group of Five for the Sahel. Its members sought the Agency's support for safety and security in the Sahel–Saharan region.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.