

General Conference

GC(62)/OR.3

Issued: March 2019

General Distribution

Original: English

Sixty-second regular session

Plenary

Record of the Third Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Tuesday, 18 September 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia)

Later: Ms HULAN (Canada)

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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
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
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
CSS	Commission on Safety Standards
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
ECAS	Enhancing Capabilities of the Safeguards Analytical Services
ENSREG	European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSAG	International Nuclear Safety Group
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

ITDB	Incident and Trafficking Database
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low enriched uranium
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PET-CT	positron emission tomography-computed tomography
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SLA	State-level safeguards approach
SLC	State-level concept
SMRs	small and medium sized or modular reactors
SPECT	single photon emission computed tomography
SPECT-CT	single photon emission computed tomography-computed tomography
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
USA	United States of America

6. General debate and Annual Report for 2017 (continued) (GC(62)/3 and additional information)

1. Mr BELSA DA COSTA (Angola) said that his country appreciated the work undertaken by the Agency, which it had joined in 1999, towards achieving the SDGs. With its focus on the contribution of nuclear science and technology to socio-economic development, the Agency provided Member States, especially African countries, with the support they required under TC projects to achieve national and regional objectives in areas such as human and animal health, agriculture, food security, the environment, water resource management, industrial applications, and specialist training through courses, seminars and workshops.
2. Angola had received Agency support under technical cooperation in diverse areas, particularly capacity building for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. His country appreciated the assistance it had been receiving from the Agency for many years in areas such as: support for feasibility studies on the use of sterilization techniques as part of efforts aimed at the control of tsetse flies; application of nuclear and molecular techniques for the diagnosis and transboundary control of animal diseases; support for the expansion of radiotherapy services; enhancement of national capacities to improve nutrition and human health; improvement of the use of isotope hydrology in the planning, management and increase of water resources; establishment of an isotope hydrology laboratory; and management of naturally occurring radioactive material.
3. Under its current CPF, Angola had attained a project implementation rate of over 95% for the 2016–2017 cycle, one of the highest rates among the Member States. A CPF for the period 2018–2023 was about to be signed.
4. Angola welcomed the Agency's decision to hold the Scientific Forum on Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation. Climate change was a major challenge for his Government since more than 30% of the national territory faced threats such as droughts, floods and increased climate variability, which affected extensive communities, especially in southern Angola, and which had a major direct impact on biodiversity, agriculture, trade, livelihoods and the implementation of anti-poverty programmes. The Scientific Forum would provide an opportunity to share experience on the use of nuclear technology to address environmental issues. Angola would also participate in the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology to be held in Vienna from 28 to 30 November 2018.
5. His country appreciated the Agency's support for the establishment of nuclear security regimes in Member States and looked forward to the International Conference on the Security of Radioactive Material in December 2018 and the International Conference on Nuclear Security in 2020.
6. Angola would shortly ratify the following instruments, which had been approved by the Council of Ministers on 27 June 2018 and were currently being reviewed by the National Assembly: the CPPNM; the Assistance Convention; the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage; the CNS; and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.
7. Mr NGAKA (Botswana) said that the Director General's visit to Botswana in 2018 had provided the country with an opportunity to become more familiar with the Agency's work. The President of Botswana had expressed his appreciation for the support received from the Agency and had highlighted areas of possible cooperation. The Director General, for his part, had noted with satisfaction the valuable contribution of the Agency's TC programme, as the use of nuclear technology for development had yielded positive outcomes in such areas as agriculture, radiation safety and human nutrition. Botswana

remained committed to establishing a radiotherapy centre and would continue to enlist the Agency's support in human capacity building. During the visit, Botswana's third CPF for the period 2018–2022 had been signed; it covered priority areas such as food and agriculture, human health, human nutrition, radiation safety and security, water resources management and energy planning.

8. Botswana continued to strengthen its national regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety and had received an IRRS mission in October 2017. It welcomed the findings indicating its significant progress over the years and remained committed to addressing the outstanding shortcomings.

9. Recognizing the importance of financial contributions to the effective implementation of the Agency's mandate, his country continued to honour its financial obligations and had paid its contribution for 2018 in full. Botswana, which could testify to the impact of the TC programme, encouraged Member States to ensure the programme's sustainability by making voluntary contributions to the TCF. His country was aware of the Agency's financial constraints and would continue to share costs when possible.

10. The 2018 Scientific Forum on Nuclear Technology for Climate was highly relevant to Botswana as a country that was prone to droughts, which often affected food security and water availability. It could benefit from the use of nuclear technology in water resources management.

11. By way of enhancing its nuclear security, Botswana had determined its threat level through a national threat assessment. The priority areas for improvement identified would be addressed under a nuclear security detection strategy, which called for the strengthening of capabilities in nuclear security, with an emphasis on prevention, detection and response. Under National Development Plan 11, his Government had made a commitment to install radiation portal monitors at strategic locations in order to curb the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material. The project was at an advanced stage, and a team of Agency experts was assisting with its implementation.

12. The INSSP for Botswana had last been reviewed and updated in 2016, and the action plan would come to an end in December 2018. Botswana had requested an expert mission in 2019 to review and update the plan and to devise a new action plan to address emerging issues.

13. His country continued to benefit from regional and interregional programmes for capacity building in the various sectors in which nuclear applications were utilized. In support of those programmes, it had hosted meetings, training courses and fellowships. His country was committed to paying its annual contributions to AFRA to ensure its sustainability. Those Member States that had not acceded to the fifth extension of the Agreement were encouraged to do so.

14. Mr COUSSOUD-MAVOUNGOU (Congo) said that his country valued the Agency's efforts in furthering peace, international security and socio-economic progress. The President of the Congo thanked the Director General for positively responding to requests made by his country during the 61st session of the General Conference.

15. Many Member States were benefiting from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and technologies, as could be seen from the progress made in various fields including energy, agriculture and stockbreeding, medicine, industry and research. Technical cooperation between the Congo and the Agency was in full swing. A mission carried out in October 2017 in connection with strengthening operational capacities to control banana tree and plantain diseases had culminated in a commitment by the Agency to build a modern biotechnology laboratory in Kombé. The joint IAEA–FAO mission in October 2017 under the project on Monitoring Livestock Diseases and Certifying Animal Health had started well with the delivery of diagnostic kits and other consumables for the construction of the Veterinary Diagnosis Laboratory in Kombé.

16. An imPACT mission had also been conducted in his country by the Agency, which was an important partner in cancer treatment, particularly radiotherapy. The Government was making concerted efforts to establish the right conditions with regard to the recommendations made by the experts from the Agency and the Congo. His country was also requesting help in creating a Regulatory Authority Information System and looked forward to the provision and installation of equipment and to receiving training for managers.

17. The Agency was making efforts to increase efficiency in a situation where Member States did not meet their financial obligations in full. The Congo was exploring its best options for meeting its responsibilities and had paid the share required to launch its TC projects for the 2018–2019 cycle.

18. As part of its efforts to ensure a sound legal framework, during the current General Conference session, the Congo was depositing an instrument of acceptance of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It had also begun the ratification process for the Joint Convention, the Assistance and Early Notification Conventions, and the CNS. The parliament was in the process of adopting legislation on all the areas of utilization of nuclear applications and their regulatory bodies.

19. His country, giving pride of place to technical cooperation, looked forward to signing its CPF with the Agency.

20. Mr NIANE (Senegal) expressed gratitude to the Agency for its ongoing support for his country's various technical cooperation activities, a prime example of which was the visit by the Director of the Division for Africa in October 2017 to assess the status of project implementation.

21. Welcoming the Agency's commitment to peaceful nuclear technology, nuclear safety and security and strengthening the application of safeguards and capacities to respond to radiological or nuclear emergencies, his country reaffirmed its own commitment to using the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in full transparency and on a safe and sustainable basis. In that connection, Senegal had ratified the majority of international conventions and treaties relevant to nuclear safety and had acceded to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. The adoption of those instruments contributed to the strengthening of international cooperation to control the transport and illicit trafficking of radioactive sources and nuclear material and also to combating nuclear terrorism. Senegal was also actively involved in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security regime and the international non-proliferation regime.

22. In view of the commissioning of three linear accelerators for radiotherapy and a SPECT–CT scanner for nuclear medicine, the construction of a new oncology centre and the launch of new projects to exploit mining and petroleum resources, the Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority had initiated a single draft nuclear law on safety, security and safeguards. The draft law had been finalized in April 2018 with the support of the Secretariat and was now awaiting adoption by the National Assembly.

23. While the responsibility for nuclear security lay with individual States, much closer regional and international attention should be paid to that issue and supported by collective action and ongoing international cooperation. Senegal participated in relevant international exchange networks such as the Nuclear Security Support Centres and the International Nuclear Security Education Network. At the subregional level, Senegal was a member, and provided the Secretary, of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa. His country was also a member of the forum of authorities responsible for nuclear safety and security of the Group of Five for the Sahel and Senegal.

24. Regarding education, Senegal welcomed the AFRA Network for Education in Science and Technology (AFRA-NEST). Senegal's virtual university, founded in 2013, currently had over 20 000

students with spaces available throughout the country and was building an AFRA-NEST–Senegal network. Senegal was committed to distance capacity building and, in its role as coordinator, would fully support the AFRA-NEST working group.

25. Senegal had also subscribed to the objectives of INPRO and actively participated in the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation and the Agency’s African regional project on Developing, Expanding and Reinforcing Energy Planning Capabilities including Nuclear Power. With Agency support, Senegal aimed to acquire a research reactor for use in the areas of health, agriculture and energy, and had initiated training in the 2018–2019 cycle; the second phase would be undertaken in the 2020–2021 cycle. In that context, Senegal would sign a partnership framework agreement during the current session of the General Conference with France’s National Institute for Nuclear Science and Technology in order to benefit from its experience and expertise.

26. At the instigation of the President of Senegal, the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation had founded an Institute of Advanced Science and Technology, including a platform devoted to nuclear science and technology. A shining example of Senegal’s cooperation with the Agency to promote development through science and technology was the use of SIT to eliminate the tsetse fly in the Niayes region.

27. Mr DE CREM (Belgium) said that for his country, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had always gone hand in hand with establishing high levels of nuclear safety that were continuously improved. Consequently, his country made systematic use of the Agency’s safety instruments such as the IRRS and SALTO. In December 2017, the Agency had conducted an IRRS follow-up mission in Belgium. The team had concluded that the majority of recommendations from the 2013 mission report had been duly taken into account, with a very positive impact on the Belgian regulatory framework and its effectiveness.

28. The new trends in international terrorism entailed a special responsibility for the nuclear sector in particular. As part of the Belgian authorities’ efforts in that regard, specially trained armed police units were replacing military personnel at nuclear sites. As the depositary of the CPPNM, the Agency should play a crucial role in its implementation.

29. Belgium appreciated the Agency’s commitment to updating its verification instruments. His country was pleased that the new SLAs had been implemented in States with integrated safeguards for a year now, representing a step forward in what should be an ongoing optimization process. His country encouraged the Agency to continue systematically increasing its efficiency and effectiveness on the basis of a thorough risk assessment. Such efficiency gains were important to the sustainability of the Agency’s verification missions. His country had been holding intense discussions with the Agency for two years with regard to the progressive introduction of unannounced inspections, along with further potential improvements to Belgium’s inspection regime.

30. His country highlighted the importance of the JCPOA and its thorough implementation by all parties. Lifting the sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran and normalizing trade and economic relations with that State were an essential component of that agreement. The JCPOA contributed to the international security architecture, and Belgium would continue to support it both politically and financially. Belgium had voluntarily contributed some €600 000 to the Agency’s verification activities in Iran, and a new contribution was planned.

31. Having assembled the expertise and experience that would allow it to attain its enhanced readiness objectives, the Agency could play an essential role in verifying the DPRK’s nuclear programme, at short notice if necessary. Belgium would help to form an Agency inspection team, with a special focus on areas including the management and measurement of plutonium to complement skills on the ground.

32. In recognition of the importance of technical cooperation, Belgium paid its TCF share in full. Moreover, in 2018, it had contributed some €600 000 in extrabudgetary funds in support of radiotherapy programmes, nuclear medicine and an agricultural project to be run by the FAO and Agency laboratories.

33. Belgium continued to be involved on a global level in the key areas of nuclear medicine and radioisotope production, research on new materials, particle accelerators and radioactive high level waste transmutation. The Belgian Government had decided to construct a Multipurpose Hybrid Research Reactor for High-tech Applications (MYRRHA), the first phase of which was the construction of MINERVA, a 100 MeV accelerator, expected to become operational by 2026. His country would provide €558 million to the project from 2019 to 2038 to cover investments in MINERVA, research and development for the facility, and operating costs after 2027. Belgium had also decided to establish an international non-profit association to promote the project and encourage the participation of other partner countries.

34. His country hoped that the Agency would fulfil the various expectations of its Member States. The implementation of effective safeguards remained a very high priority. The Agency should continue to rely on excellent leadership and prudent management of its funds. Belgium welcomed the Agency's decision to hold the Scientific Forum on Nuclear Technology for Climate, as climate change affected everyone and was currently one of the most pressing challenges.

35. Mr ALI KOURA (Chad) said that the Agency played a fundamental role in assisting Member States in the application of the highest nuclear security and radiation safety standards in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It was also essential to strengthen the peer review mechanism among operators.

36. During the process to review and adopt Chad's INSSP in July 2018, experts from the Agency and Chad had examined in detail all the functional areas of nuclear security, including the legislative and regulatory framework, prevention, detection, intervention or response, and sustainability. The experts from Chad had also been familiarized with the 12 essential elements of a nuclear security regime as detailed in the Nuclear Security Fundamentals publication.

37. With regard to radiation safety, Chad planned to organize several training programmes, including through regional and national projects, to strengthen the protection of workers, patients, the public, and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation. His country reaffirmed its commitment to promoting radiation and nuclear safety requirements based on international safety standards, which were key instruments for progressively applying safety standards at all levels.

38. In line with its commitment to meeting safeguards, nuclear security and radiation safety requirements Chad, which possessed considerable uranium resources, would work actively to promote the peaceful use of nuclear techniques and the strengthening of the relevant international legal framework. Chad stood ready to work with the Agency and all Member States to establish a peaceful world free of all weapons of mass destruction, and to strengthen the radiation safety and nuclear security regimes. In view of the crucial importance of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, his country would cooperate with all Agency advisory missions.

39. Chad was currently implementing TC projects on: addressing anthropogenic pollution in the Chari-Logone system; assessing the quality of water and beverages in N'Djamena, Sarh and Bol; supporting the Chad Radiation Protection and Nuclear Security Agency through training and nuclear science and technology transfer; nutritional care for persons living with HIV/AIDS with spirulina-fortified grain-based food supplementation; and combating animal and human trypanosomosis vectors in the Mandoul region. His country's CPF would be duly implemented to support current TC projects and develop beneficial future ones.

40. His country planned to use isotopic techniques to study the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System it shared with Egypt, Libya, and the Sudan, in addition to the aquifers in the Sahara Member States and particularly that of the Lake Chad Basin. Chad welcomed the Agency's multifaceted assistance under regional and subregional programmes, and would participate actively in AFRA.
41. The Chad Radiation Protection and Nuclear Security Agency had organized several national training workshops on the detection of ionizing radiation sources at the country's borders, the safe transport of radioactive substances, and awareness-raising for hospital and oil company personnel to foster a radiation safety and nuclear security culture.
42. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that her country closely followed the Agency's continuing efforts to build on the implementation by Member States of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the IAEA report on the Fukushima Daiichi accident and the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, and their use in defining the nuclear safety strategy and programme of work.
43. She commended the Secretariat for organizing advisory and technical meetings and workshops to support Member States in developing and strengthening their own safety culture programmes, promoting and sustaining oversight of the safety culture of both licensees and regulatory bodies, and for its ongoing revision of Safety Guides to support the publication *Leadership and Management for Safety* (IAEA Safety Standards Series No. GSR Part 2).
44. She drew attention to the report *Ensuring Robust National Nuclear Safety Systems – Institutional Strength in Depth*, published by INSAG, and to the assessment of the report's implications for the Agency's safety standards and peer review and advisory services, which had been carried out at the request of the CSS, of which she was the chair.
45. In connection with its ongoing strong support for the CNS, her country planned to participate actively in the Eighth Review Meeting in 2020.
46. During the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention, held in Vienna in mid-2018, the Contracting Parties had reviewed national reports, identifying that good progress had been made in many areas of spent fuel and radioactive waste safety, and had adopted proposals to improve the effectiveness of the review process. Two Areas of Good Performance in the Czech Republic had been identified: the coming into force of a new Atomic Act and related decrees, which incorporated applicable international regulations, and the approval of the updated national policy for radioactive waste and spent fuel management, reflecting Euratom requirements and Agency and OECD/NEA recommendations.
47. The Czech Republic had long been an advocate for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy based on close bilateral and multilateral cooperation and fully supported the Agency's important work with regard to non-proliferation, nuclear energy, nuclear safety, nuclear security and technical cooperation. The Czech Republic contributed in full and on time to the Regular Budget and TCF, and provided extrabudgetary contributions through the PUI to assist Armenia in upgrading its national nuclear regulatory infrastructure. In addition, Czech experts participated frequently in peer review missions to other Member States.
48. Whilst nuclear power production in the European region, especially in relation to new build, was sometimes unpopular as it did not offer a guaranteed return on investment, the obligation of States to ensure strategic commodities like electricity for their citizens went beyond such considerations. Units due to be decommissioned in the next few decades needed to be replaced, but the Czech Republic was already slightly behind its original schedule, primarily owing to economic considerations, and political decisions were also pending. Ensuring public trust and confidence by employing the most advanced nuclear safety measures involved substantial costs to be borne by investors, but the widespread adoption

of robust nuclear safety and security standards, alongside effective non-proliferation measures, was of paramount importance for the successful development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide.

49. Mr DISTEFANO (Italy) said that his country highly valued the range of the Agency's activities and would continue supporting the Agency both financially, as the seventh highest contributor to the Regular Budget, and politically in its present capacity as a member of the Board of Governors.

50. The Agency's safeguards system represented a fundamental assurance mechanism for Italy's security and played an essential role in upholding the NPT. As a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol represented the current verification standard, such instruments must be universally concluded without delay as a means of enhancing trust between States and progressing toward the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy and applications. In that respect, Italy continued to support the development and implementation of SLAs to further strengthen the effectiveness of the safeguards system.

51. Italy strongly supported the Agency's verification and monitoring activities under the JCPOA. It welcomed the Agency's confirmation, in 12 successive reports, that the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to implement its nuclear commitments, and it encouraged the Agency to continue its scrupulous verification. Italy, for its part, would continue to make voluntary financial contributions to that crucial endeavour. As the JCPOA was a key element of the global non-proliferation architecture, the full implementation of that plan and of all provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) by all Member States would foster regional and international security.

52. Following a deeply troubling 2017, during which the DPRK's nuclear and missile tests had threatened international peace and security, the positive developments in the first half of 2018 had been welcome, notably the high-level talks between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK and the Singapore summit between the USA and the DPRK. He expressed hope that such promising steps could lead to an open and constructive dialogue with a view to reaching the common aim of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Italy urged the DPRK to prove its willingness to engage in credible negotiations by returning to the NPT, signing and ratifying the CTBT and promptly resuming its cooperation with the Agency.

53. Italy was committed to promoting the universal adherence to and full implementation of nuclear — as well as biological and chemical — non-proliferation and disarmament agreements, which was an impelling priority, especially for the Middle East region. It was regrettable that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East had not been convened. His country would continue to support initiatives aimed at relaunching an inclusive dialogue among countries in that region.

54. Concerning the safety of its nuclear installations, Italy continued to implement its national policy for the decommissioning and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste in strict cooperation with the Agency. Following an initial ARTEMIS review in 2017 of Italy's programme for decommissioning and radioactive waste management, a second mission had been conducted in 2018 to review the specific dismantling strategies and technologies identified by the company Sogin for Trino and Garigliano, two of the four Italian nuclear power plants currently undergoing decommissioning. Both reviews had provided new perspectives on the country's activities along with very useful recommendations. The international team had also identified good practices that Italy stood ready to share with other countries facing similar challenges.

55. As of 1 August 2018, the new National Inspectorate for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection had become fully operational as the new national competent regulatory authority, with greater power, independence and financial and human resources, in accordance with the 2016 IRRS mission recommendations. Italy also remained fully committed to the implementation of the Code of Conduct

on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

56. Ensuring the highest levels of nuclear security was an interest shared by the entire international community, which should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as a contribution to the development of nuclear technologies and applications for peaceful purposes. In the context of its efforts to promote nuclear security culture and capacity building worldwide, Italy had continued to finance the International School on Nuclear Security, jointly run by the Agency and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. The School was highly valued by developing and emerging countries for its contribution to the development of a cadre of nuclear safety and security professionals. As a further demonstration of its commitment to nuclear safety and security, Italy had long supported the work at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Their forthcoming completion would allow Ukraine to deal with the long-term decommissioning of the site in a safe and secure manner.

57. Italy greatly appreciated the Agency's technical assistance and cooperation programmes. It had made voluntary contributions to joint Agency–FAO projects centred on addressing the specific needs of LDCs, and had provided an associate expert to the Joint Division for a period of two years.

58. In 2018, Italy had also hosted several foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centres within the framework of fellowships financed under the Agency's TC programme. Furthermore, a two-year Master's degree in Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics and the University of Trieste continued to enable young graduates to become clinical medical physicists in their home countries. Elsewhere, the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente 'G. Nicoli' in Bologna had for years been one of the Agency's Collaborating Centres in the development and implementation of a SIT package with a view to suppressing the Aedes mosquito.

59. The National Institute for Nuclear Physics continued its research programmes on accelerator-based alternatives to uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest, radiotherapy with beams of protons and heavier nuclei, nuclear data relevant for innovative nuclear systems and hybrid systems for the incineration of nuclear waste. Concerning safeguards, it was pursuing new technologies for the safety and security of radioactive waste and spent fuel, during both transport and storage, that could offer enhanced and cost-effective surveillance of repositories and ports.

60. Italy was also actively engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative nuclear systems and on methods and technologies to strengthen safety and security, with the aim of protecting both people and the environment. In particular, it was proud to announce the construction of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility, the international centre of excellence for nuclear fusion research to be built by the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment in collaboration with European and international partners. The National Agency aimed to address some of the greatest challenges posed by fusion with the objective of linking the ITER project with the demonstration fusion power plant reactor.

61. Mr ECHAZÚ ALVARADO (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his country had achieved significant progress in building a new society based on equitable sustainable development and respect for Mother Earth. It was faced with major challenges in the years ahead and would pursue greater social inclusion through the process of change and by implementing the country's 2025 development agenda and the 2020 national economic and social development plan, in which the Bolivian nuclear programme played an important role. Considerable progress had been made in implementing that programme during the past year, thanks to continuous dialogue with the Agency and support from the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

62. September 2017 had marked a historic milestone for Bolivia with the signing of a contract for the development of the first Nuclear Technology Research and Development Centre, which would be located in the city of El Alto, more than 4000 metres above sea level. The Centre would comprise a research reactor, a cyclotron for the production of radiopharmaceuticals and a multipurpose irradiation plant. It would begin operations in 2019.

63. Bolivia's instrument of ratification of the Amendment to the CPPNM had been deposited with the Agency.

64. Construction work had begun on a network of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy centres in El Alto, La Paz and Santa Cruz, the most densely populated cities of Bolivia. The project represented a new stage in the use of nuclear technology for medical purposes, and would provide the basis for improved treatment for diverse cardiological and neurological illnesses and for the detection and treatment of cancer. Bolivia participated in the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control, and promoted that initiative in the Latin American region, which, unfortunately, had high rates of cervical cancer.

65. A visit by the Director General to Bolivia in December 2017 had led to closer cooperation with the Agency and the development of the CPF for 2018–2023, which would be signed during the current General Conference. It would support the development of the nuclear infrastructure required for the implementation of the Bolivian nuclear programme, including an up-to-date legal and regulatory framework in line with current needs and complying with the highest international standards and good practices in the nuclear industry, thereby reaffirming the country's commitment to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

66. Bolivia hoped that the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons could be achieved through the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which it had signed on 16 April 2018. It was essential to promote non-proliferation and disarmament and constructive cooperation for the achievement of those goals.

67. Mr SNIR (Israel), in a spirit of reflection in line with the current celebration of Yom Kippur, conveyed his country's concern about the ongoing unrest in the Middle East, which threatened global peace and security and demanded international attention.

68. Now more than ever, nuclear safety and security should be at the forefront of global concern. Given that threats to nuclear safety and security respected no boundaries, Israel strongly encouraged regional cooperation. His country had repeatedly expressed its willingness to collaborate with all of its neighbours on safety and security issues. Unfortunately, however, the State of Israel was not recognized by various other States in the Middle East. Regrettably, the Islamic Republic of Iran had openly and explicitly called for Israel's destruction.

69. Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic posed significant proliferation threats to the region and the world. Syria had built an undeclared military nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour, in a clear violation of the NPT and its safeguards obligations. The Agency and the international community should have already taken action ten years previously, and must do so now.

70. Recalling Iran's statement at the meeting on the preceding day about the importance of preserving the JCPOA, he emphasized that that unsound agreement had been conceived because of repeated violations by Iran of its international obligations under the NPT. Iran was the only country in the world in relation to which such an agreement had been drawn up, specifically because of those serious violations and the threat the country posed to regional peace and security.

71. Israel had long detailed Iran's long-term plan to acquire military nuclear capabilities and had repeatedly emphasized the need to confront Iran about its lies and concealment efforts. The Agency

must conduct a robust verification of the country's clandestine activities. Iran's covert nuclear weapons programme was a documented fact. New information recently disclosed by Israel proved conclusively that Iran had carried out activities that were part of a well-orchestrated plan to pursue the development of nuclear weapons.

72. In the context of the JCPOA, the Board had, unfortunately, ceased to review the possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme. However, Iran had lied to the Agency and the international community, and it had transpired that there were in fact concrete military dimensions to the programme. In the light of such destabilizing events, the repeated and explicit threats made by Iran and its proxies to attack Israeli nuclear sites could not be ignored. Such outrageous threats required Israel to take action and continue to protect and defend its nuclear facilities, which were continually upgraded and reinforced in line with Agency safety guidelines, in order to withstand any attack.

73. A founder Agency member, Israel committed its best human capital to its activities with the Agency and benefited from the organization's expertise and knowledge. It actively participated in and regularly contributed to the Agency's Safety Standards Committees, and played an active role in exercises led by the Incident and Emergency Centre as well as in meetings on emergency preparedness.

74. In the context of its important collaboration with the Agency under the TC programme, Israel had developed new national and regional initiatives in such areas as education, medicine and agriculture. It had considerably increased its contribution to the TCF in recent years, and in 2018 had provided an extrabudgetary contribution, demonstrating its long-standing support for the Agency's work.

75. Israel regretted the ongoing abuse and politicization by the Arab Group. The agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities was politically motivated and contradicted the Agency's spirit and mandate. While it was encouraging that no corresponding resolution had been submitted for the past two years, it was regrettable that the item remained on the agenda. The discussion of the issue in the context of the General Conference damaged the Agency's credibility as a professional organization.

76. Mr MÜNT (Estonia) acknowledged the Agency's valuable role in the non-proliferation regime and in ensuring that nuclear material and technology were used for peaceful purposes only. Estonia supported universal implementation of the NPT; the safeguards system played an essential role in that regard.

77. His country continued to support the implementation of the JCPOA and the Agency's long-term verification and monitoring of the nuclear-related commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Estonia had also made voluntary contributions to support the Agency's verification activities in Iran.

78. The missiles and nuclear weapons of the DPRK constituted a threat to global peace and security. The inter-Korean high-level talks and the summit in Singapore between the USA and the DPRK had been positive steps that could contribute to easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Estonia hoped that the DPRK would engage in follow-up negotiations and embark on a credible path to complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, maintaining its declared suspension of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile testing.

79. Estonia welcomed the Director General's decision to devote the Scientific Forum to climate change. Although its National Energy Development Plan 2030+ did not envisage the use of nuclear energy, Estonia acknowledged the decision by some countries to use nuclear energy to mitigate climate change by preventing or reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, all new nuclear power plants should be designed, sited, constructed and operated according to international safety standards and relevant conventions. It was also necessary to act in a transparent manner and establish reliable communication between interested parties and neighbouring countries.

80. Estonia attached great importance to the improvement of nuclear safety and regularly updated its regulatory framework. The Agency's safety peer review missions had proven invaluable in supporting national nuclear and radiation safety arrangements. Estonia had hosted an IRRS mission in 2016 and was preparing for the follow-up mission and an ARTEMIS mission in 2019.

81. While it had no operating nuclear power reactors, Estonia had inherited a nuclear submarine training centre from the Soviet Union that was currently being used as an interim storage facility for radioactive waste. In 2016, the Estonian Government had decided to build a radioactive waste repository in the country by 2040 to ensure the long-term safe storage of such waste. Site selection and strategic environmental impact assessment procedures were to be initiated at the beginning of 2019.

82. Estonia recognized the Agency's central role in strengthening the international nuclear security framework by promoting the implementation of relevant international legal instruments, enhancing international cooperation and assisting States in nuclear security capacity building. In the process of digitalization, it was essential not to underestimate the need to improve the cybersecurity of nuclear facilities and national databases because cyberattacks on nuclear power plants or facilities with high activity sources posed a serious threat with potentially catastrophic consequences. Estonia was willing to share its unique expertise in the development and management of cyber systems with the Agency.

83. Estonia highly valued the TC programme and its role in enhancing the responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and in contributing to global socio-economic development and the achievement of the SDGs.

84. Estonia had benefited from various projects funded by the TCF for over 25 years. Through fruitful technical cooperation with the Agency, the country had gained valuable knowledge that it was sharing with other Member States. It had trained Agency fellows and organized scientific visits and workshops to share its experience and continued to offer its expertise.

85. Ms SABAITIENĖ (Lithuania) said that the Agency's peer review missions were excellent tools for strengthening nuclear safety throughout the entire nuclear power plant life cycle. The growing demand for the Agency's specialized missions was proof of confidence in its expertise. Lithuania encouraged all countries that had operational nuclear power plants or that were in the process of becoming nuclear power producers to take full advantage of those services. Newcomer countries should be especially willing to benefit from the full scope of the Agency's services in order to properly implement the international safety standards and follow best practice. Follow-up missions were of crucial importance as they helped to ensure that recommended safety improvements were implemented. Beneficiaries of the Agency's technical assistance should consider safety requirements and recommendations to be mandatory and use the follow-up missions to ensure strict adherence to the Agency's safety standards.

86. Safety standards should be implemented in a transparent, comprehensive and responsible manner from the site selection stage. However, some newcomer countries had demonstrated a declarative and selective approach to nuclear safety and interpreted the mission findings in such a way as to mislead the public. The site selection procedure for a new nuclear power plant should be followed carefully and accurately and include a comprehensive threat assessment. A selective approach to safety might endanger the citizens of the country concerned as well as of neighbouring countries because the consequences of a nuclear accident respected no borders. In making full use of the Agency's review services, all Member States should focus on safety rather than the project implementation schedule.

87. In connection with the need for international responsibility in the use of nuclear energy, the elevated levels of ruthenium-106 detected by a number of European countries in 2017 clearly illustrated the existence of irresponsible practices. The source of the incident was still unknown, which undermined trust in nuclear energy use among national authorities, the public and the international community.

Lithuania therefore urged all Member States to take steps to identify the source of the release and to further develop international instruments and practices to avoid similar events in the future.

88. Lithuania, which firmly supported promoting the universality of the NPT, encouraged the DPRK and the Islamic Republic of Iran to return to full and indisputable compliance with the NPT and other relevant agreements in a complete and verifiable manner.

89. Acknowledging that new and ongoing challenges such as nuclear terrorism and the misuse of nuclear and radioactive material were of particular concern to the international community, Lithuania fully supported increasing nuclear security. Such an intricate global setting called for a new, robust and clear security paradigm in managing international cooperation in that area. A third IPPAS mission hosted by Lithuania in October 2017, had found that her country had established and maintained a robust and comprehensive physical security regime. Lithuania called on all Member States to make full use of the Agency's nuclear security advisory services.

90. Noting the benefits derived from its Nuclear Security Centre of Excellence, Lithuania strived to continuously exploit and expand the potential of the Centre as a full-scale regional capacity building and training institution in the prevention, detection, response to, and investigation into, the smuggling of nuclear and radioactive material. In October 2018, the Centre would host a Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism Sentinel II workshop on developing national nuclear security exercise programmes.

91. Proper funding for TC activities was of great importance, and Lithuania was fulfilling its obligations to the TCF. It was thankful that the TC programme had provided its institutions with opportunities to strengthen their competence in various areas and to share their experience with other countries.

92. While each country had the right to develop nuclear power, it also had the responsibility to do so in a transparent, safe and secure manner. The world should learn all the lessons from past devastating accidents. The Agency's standards and its role in ensuring nuclear safety worldwide should be strengthened and the use of its services made more mandatory.

Ms HULAN (Canada), Vice-President, took the chair.

93. Mr REVAZ (Switzerland) said that his country welcomed the Agency's current monitoring and verification activities relating to the JCPOA, which was a key component of the global non-proliferation regime. The Director General's latest report confirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran was complying fully with its multilateral commitments under the JCPOA. While some of its provisions were temporary, no time limit was applicable to the strict verification standards in the form of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. Switzerland was concerned about the possible consequences of the decision by the USA to withdraw from the JCPOA and encouraged the other States parties to continue fulfilling all their obligations.

94. Switzerland had also been closely monitoring developments on the Korean Peninsula in recent months. The ultimate aim of the dialogue initiated between the stakeholders was the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which would be a welcome development. As all available multilateral mechanisms should be used to support such a project, his country hoped that the Agency and the CTBTO would be actively involved.

95. The Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention had confirmed that Switzerland was duly meeting its obligations. Given the importance of such meetings, Switzerland called on other States to accede to the Joint Convention.

96. Switzerland remained committed to promoting the worldwide implementation of the principles of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety and to ensuring that those principles were taken into account in relevant Agency resolutions and documents. It was vitally important for the Agency to include among its standards the safety objective defined in the second principle of the Declaration. Switzerland intended to call for global sharing of technical information regarding reasonably practicable safety improvements for existing nuclear facilities.

97. A culture conducive to greater nuclear safety should be promoted at the international level, and the Agency should take more vigorous action not only in technical and regulatory terms but also in political terms. Switzerland would continue to call for the dissemination of such a culture.

98. Switzerland planned to support the Agency's activities aimed at developing nuclear security and serving as an international coordinator in that regard. His country would continue to promote the comprehensive security of nuclear material designated for civilian or military purposes. It also called on the Agency to initiate consultations with States Parties as soon as possible to ensure that preparatory work for the first review conference on the amended CPPNM could be launched in good time.

99. An IPPAS mission had been conducted in May 2018 at Switzerland's invitation, and the international team of experts had submitted valuable proposals and recommendations.

100. Switzerland welcomed the objective of the SLC, namely to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's verification missions. The latest Agency report on the SLA indicated that it was too early to make a conclusive assessment and that the declared objectives had not yet been achieved. Switzerland therefore continued to advocate the optimization of the safeguards system so that the limited resources were primarily deployed where they could be most effective.

101. The ReNuAL project was of great importance for the Agency and its Member States. Switzerland had made a substantial contribution to the project on constructing a linear accelerator for its Dosimetry Laboratory so that the Agency could assist Member States in controlling the quality of radiotherapy. It looked forward to the inauguration of the linear accelerator during the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology to be held in November 2018.

102. As the Agency required adequate financial resources to fulfil its mandate, Switzerland was pleased to note the elaboration of a new method of price adjustment. As the existing method did not allow for a reliable estimate of price changes, resulting in significant increases in the second year of the budget cycle, Switzerland hoped that the new method would ensure greater predictability.

103. Switzerland was concerned about the findings of the Internal Audit Activity Report concerning the OIOS' independence and the evaluation of PACT. That programme could make a valuable contribution to the SDGs in the area of health, especially in terms of cancer treatment options for low and middle-income countries. The potential of PACT should be fully exploited in cooperation with external partners, and the available financial resources should be effectively invested. It was extremely important to ensure the integration and acceptance of PACT within the Agency. Switzerland thanked the Director General's task force on the reorientation of PACT for the work it had undertaken to date and looked forward with great interest to the outcome.

104. With a view to implementing Switzerland's 2050 Energy Strategy, Swiss universities continued to engage intensively in nuclear research activities, and Switzerland actively participated in international research projects such as Generation IV and ITER with a view to retaining its nuclear expertise.

105. Mr HERDAN (Germany) said that his country planned to shut down its last nuclear power plant by the end of 2022 and to base 65% of its power production on renewables by 2030, but it respected the sovereign right of every country to choose its own energy mix and supply. Since its establishment in June 2017, the State-owned Fund for the Financing of Nuclear Waste Disposal had begun investing the

funds provided by nuclear power plant operators, shifting the responsibility for waste from private companies to the government.

106. His country had supported the modernization of the Agency's nuclear applications laboratories at Seibersdorf under ECAS, ReNuAL and ReNuAL+ with extrabudgetary contributions of €11 million since 2011 and had contributed more than €5 million to the NSF. Germany called on others in a position to do so to also make substantial contributions.

107. Given the paramount importance of effective and efficient Agency safeguards, Germany funded one of the first Member State Support Programmes. The fact that three more countries that had recently brought additional protocols into force and Sri Lanka's additional protocol had been approved constituted important progress towards the universalization of the additional protocol. At the same time, his country supported the further development of SLAs for all States with safeguards agreements, as they enabled the Agency to better focus its verification efforts, as reflected in the Director General's recent report.

108. Nuclear safety remained a top priority, and Germany strongly encouraged cooperation between regulators and a worldwide system of mutual controls, particularly self-assessments and international peer reviews conducted in cooperation with the Agency.

109. Although the concentrations of ruthenium-106 detected in air samples by several European States in 2017 had been far from harmful, it was of great concern that no State had yet reported any accident. As a consequence, Germany encouraged the Member States to come to an agreement with the Secretariat on how the international community could deal with possible future situations where elevated activity levels were observed but no State made any notification in accordance with the Early Notification Convention.

110. Germany welcomed the Agency's efforts to address the growing need for support in the area of cyber and computer security issues, to embed computer security provisions into recommendations documents and to step up capacity building in that regard, and his country commended the Agency for its ongoing work on the ITDB.

111. Given the role of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle in supporting non-proliferation and security of supply, the establishment of the Agency LEU Bank in Kazakhstan was an important step; his country expected LEU to be supplied to the bank on the basis of strict, transparent and non-discriminatory tender procedures.

112. As an important element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, the JCPOA contributed significantly to security in the Middle East and beyond. As such, it represented a national and shared European security interest and Germany, together with its EU partners, would uphold the continued implementation of that plan as long as the Islamic Republic of Iran fully complied with its commitments. He called on Iran to fully cooperate with the Agency, including by replying in a timely manner to its communications and requests for access.

113. Germany also remained committed to the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and welcomed the recent inter-Korean summits, the Panmunjom Declaration and the joint statement by the DPRK and the USA. The DPRK should demonstrate its commitment to denuclearization with concrete and sustainable steps; until it complied fully with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and returned to the NPT and the Agency safeguards regime, Germany would continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions. His country commended the Secretariat for its preparations to verify the DPRK's nuclear programme.

114. Mr MIKHADZIUK (Belarus) said that sustainable development was currently an important feature of international cooperation, and the SDGs were a key instrument in that regard. As a founder

member of the Agency, Belarus welcomed its contribution to the efforts to attain nine of the goals. The development and broad dissemination of peaceful nuclear and radiation technologies had lent an impetus to the international community's efforts in tackling global challenges, such as energy and food security, cancer treatment and combating global warming.

115. His country supported the TC programme as an effective mechanism enabling the Agency to discharge its mandate under Article IV of the NPT, ensuring that interested countries could benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and strengthening international cooperation. The TC programme had provided significant assistance to his country in tackling socio-economic development challenges. Over the past three decades, it had helped Belarus in successfully addressing the sustainable development of the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident as well as contributing significantly to national programmes on the development of nuclear medicine and on establishing a basis for domestic radiopharmaceutical production.

116. Belarus welcomed the Agency's assistance to Member States in establishing and developing a nuclear power infrastructure. His country had cooperated with the Agency from the outset in developing its national nuclear power programme, making active use of the full range of tools, including the TC programme, expert missions and peer reviews. Belarus had made full use of the practical Milestones approach. It also looked forward to the development of a road map along similar lines for the use of the Agency instruments relevant to nuclear newcomer countries.

117. The construction of his country's first nuclear power plant was progressing well; work on the first unit was almost complete. His country was working constructively on all fronts with the supplier, the Russian Federation, and given the crucial role of such close cooperation in the successful implementation of a nuclear power programme, Belarus stood ready to share its experiences.

118. Given how the Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents highlighted the importance of nuclear safety, the Agency's significant contribution to the creation of a reliable nuclear safety infrastructure worldwide was all the more valuable. Global demand for the Agency's services was growing steadily, and the quality of the Agency's work in that area was a factor in the international community's confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Belarus appreciated the Agency's work to strengthen and universalize the relevant conventions and to develop specialized standards and technical documents. The Secretariat's work to expand its advisory and independent peer review services was vital, and his country welcomed its ongoing efforts to optimize the content and range of mission models in line with Member States' requirements.

119. The NPT remained one of the fundamental elements of international security and strategic stability. Belarus attached great importance to the Agency's safeguards system and its ongoing improvement. It was vital that the process of strengthening the safeguards regime should remain comprehensible, objective and based on the rights and obligations of parties in accordance with their safeguards agreements.

120. Mr BAGHRAMYAN (Armenia) said that his country attached great importance to developing and deepening its cooperation with the Agency; successful areas of cooperation included nuclear power and nuclear medicine. His Government highly appreciated the Agency's support in developing the safe use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Safety improvement and the life extension programme for the second unit of the Armenian nuclear power plant (ANPP) were regularly discussed in the Presidential Council for Nuclear Energy Safety, which also included leading foreign experts.

121. Compliance with the non-proliferation regime was of great importance to the future development of nuclear power, whereby the good-faith application of NPT safeguards was key. Under its safeguards agreement and additional protocol, Armenia submitted accounting records and declarations in a correct and timely manner, and promoted safeguards implementation in the country. Joint inspections had been

organized related to the implementation of safeguards obligations and their protection, thus confirming that Armenia fulfilled its obligations and was open to constructive dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation.

122. Armenia continued to implement the recommendations and proposals of the Agency's regulatory review missions and the advisory mission on physical protection in accordance with the approved work plans.

123. In August 2018, with the support of the Agency, a regional training course on conducting computer security assessments had been organized in Yerevan and had been attended by 35 specialists from 8 countries in the region. Armenian representatives had also participated in a ConvEx under the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions.

124. He stressed that the safety of the existing ANPP unit was a top priority for his Government. According to the strategic documents on the development of Armenia's energy system, the construction of a new unit was planned to ensure the system's independence and security. The selection of the type and capacity depended on an analysis of the international market and the possibility of incorporating the units into Armenia's power system, taking into account the adequate flexibility and reliability of the entire system. The decision to develop nuclear energy was strategic and a key element of the energy development programme.

125. The life extension for ANPP unit 2 was being implemented in accordance with the approved programme. A comprehensive survey of safety-related equipment had been carried out and measures taken to upgrade the unit. Thanks to the successful cooperation between Armenia and the Russian Federation, extensive work had been completed in a short time. Measures were also being taken to improve the design and operational safety of the unit.

126. In June 2017, the ANPP and the National Polytechnic University had signed an agreement to establish a joint forensics laboratory with the technical support of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

127. In 2015, Armenia had submitted to the European Commission the final version of the report on the ANPP stress test in accordance with the ENSREG requirements. In June 2016, a European Commission expert mission had reviewed the national report on the ANPP stress test. The list of measures drawn up on the basis of the stress test had been included in the programme for extending the lifetime of the ANPP unit 2. The conclusions of numerous internationally recognized experts confirmed that the safety of the ANPP complied with Agency standards.

128. In the framework of EU technical support, work on the document entitled 'Strategy for the Management of Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel' had been completed. An action plan had been developed to implement the strategy, which would be reviewed by the Government. Armenia planned to create a national operator for radioactive waste management and to introduce the 'polluter pays' principle.

129. In October 2017, Armenia had submitted its second national report regarding the fulfilment of its obligations under the Joint Convention, and three Areas of Good Performance had been mentioned at the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention.

130. Armenia had received substantial assistance through national and regional TC projects and significant progress had been made in such areas as: strengthening the capacities of the regulatory authority in the review, assessment and licensing of safety upgrades implemented at the ANPP; establishing an environmental radiation monitoring laboratory; building capacity in the field of radiation oncology and diagnostics; establishing a secondary standards laboratory and a calibration system for

dosimeters at X-ray facilities; and extending the seismic telemetry network. Armenia wished to continue technical cooperation with the Agency.

131. Armenia was an active member of INPRO and participated in projects such as Roadmaps for a Transition to Globally Sustainable Nuclear Energy Systems, Key Indicators for Innovative Nuclear Energy Systems, and an Integrated Approach to the Back-End of the Fuel Cycle. He reaffirmed his country's interest in participating in INPRO projects, particularly those related to the development of small and medium-sized reactors, and also its readiness to organize meetings in its territory.

132. Since achieving independence, joining the United Nations and other international organizations and establishing partnerships with friendly States, Armenia had been a strong proponent of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Having worked closely with the Agency on a broad range of issues relating to nuclear safety and security, Armenia greatly valued that relationship and considered it essential to its energy policy and national security. He expressed his country's full support for the Agency's work in the further development of the peaceful and safe use of atomic energy.

133. Mr TAGHI-ZADA (Azerbaijan) expressed appreciation for the Director General's visit to his country, which bore witness to the Agency's solicitude towards Member States and would contribute to closer cooperation. It had been noted that Azerbaijan was an important partner of the Agency and discussions had been held on the prospects for further cooperation, the Agency's role in global nuclear security, the SDGs, regional peace and security, and also issues related to the growing nuclear threat.

134. With regard to the national TC projects, the President had paid special attention to the application of new methods and nuclear technologies to improve the quantity and quality of cotton production. The expansion of technical cooperation with the Agency to include agriculture alongside the traditional areas of activity reflected the Agency's status in the country. The Director General had also met with various ministers, and had visited the National Centre for Nuclear Research and the National Center of Oncology. Confident that the visit to Azerbaijan would lead to enhanced cooperation with the Agency in the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and in ensuring global nuclear security, he wished the Director General a swift recovery.

135. The entry into force in 2016 of the Amendment to the CPPNM had provided new effective mechanisms for applying the global nuclear security regime. Work was under way in Azerbaijan to bring its legislation into line with the Convention and a draft law had already been prepared to ensure compliance with the requirements of Article 7, namely to introduce an article into the Criminal Code defining penalties for illegal activities involving nuclear materials or facilities. A draft presidential decree had already been prepared and submitted for consideration to designate the appropriate State body as a point of contact on matters falling within the scope of the Convention. Azerbaijan would continue its cooperation with the Agency to establish an effective and sustainable national regime for the physical protection of nuclear material.

136. Azerbaijan, in strict compliance with its NPT obligations and safeguards agreement, attached great importance to the further development of the Agency safeguards system. It was continuing to strengthen its national safeguards system in close cooperation with the Department of Safeguards. An inspection in August 2018 had confirmed that Azerbaijan was in compliance with its obligations, and the necessary procedures had recently been completed for the submission of safeguards declarations through the State Declarations Portal.

137. TC projects on the application of nuclear technologies in medicine had facilitated the development of both human resources and technical capabilities. The Nuclear Medicine Centre of the National Oncology Centre, established in 2016, had thus been included in the European Association of Nuclear Medicine's Research4Life accreditation programme, despite having only two years of experience, and having successfully passed the test, had been accredited as a centre of excellence for PET-CT. His

Government would continue to focus on priority areas and the achievement of the goals outlined in the CPF.

138. Azerbaijan was developing activities to prevent trafficking in radioactive and nuclear material and to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism, guided by the Agency's principles as a leading and authoritative international organization coordinating global nuclear security. Understanding the gravity of the ever-increasing threat, Azerbaijan attached particular importance to the prevention of the use of its territories for the purpose of trafficking nuclear materials and continued to develop a comprehensive national export control system. However, owing to the occupation by Armenia of 20% of Azerbaijani territory, such measures could not be put in place in Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven surrounding regions. Those territories currently remained unprotected from smuggling, including trafficking in nuclear materials. The first step in establishing a comprehensive nuclear security regime in the region would be to liberate the occupied territories from Armenian occupation.

139. Azerbaijan had repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the threat from Armenia's Metsamor nuclear power plant — its technology was now dated and it had been in operation since 1976. Armenia's reckless decision to extend the plant's operational lifetime and build a new unit in the same dangerous zone had raised valid safety concerns in Azerbaijan and neighbouring countries.

140. Mr GIZAW WOLDEAMANUEL (Ethiopia), having wished the Director General a fast recovery, said that the international community's pledge to achieve the SDGs by 2030 bore witness to the collective efforts aimed at building a more prosperous and peaceful world.

141. Ethiopia had one of the fastest-growing economies, and the development of science, technology and innovation was critical in order to reach its goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2020. It was undertaking the difficult task of sustaining its hard-fought development gains while also implementing the SDGs, which had been mainstreamed into its national development plan. Science and technology played a crucial role in developing Ethiopia's industrial base, ensuring sustainable development, and achieving smooth economic progress.

142. Ethiopia had put legal and institutional mechanisms in place to deal with the registration and licensing of all nuclear safety and security-related activities. The Ethiopian Radiation Protection Authority, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, was the competent institution overseeing the use of ionizing radiation and other related practices. His country's radiation safety regulatory framework and practices had been assessed against Agency safety standards by an IRRS mission, which had led to regulatory improvements.

143. The Agency had supported Ethiopia in the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology to achieve socio-economic development. His country had been involved in a number of national, regional and interregional projects on applying nuclear techniques in such areas as agriculture, human health, water resources management, industry, radiation protection, safety and security. Thanks to PACT and other activities, real progress had been achieved in the expansion of diagnostic and therapeutic services in the federal and regional states.

144. Ethiopia was proud to collaborate with the Agency on the flagship project of creating a large area of farmland free of the tsetse fly, thereby improving crop and livestock production; his country stood ready to share its best practices with other countries in need. The Agency had also supported Ethiopia's efforts to ensure human capital through fellowships and training programmes.

145. In the context of the Agenda for Disarmament announced by the United Nations Secretary-General in May 2018, Ethiopia reaffirmed its support for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Sustainable development could not be realized without peace and security, and his country called on all concerned parties to embark urgently upon constructive negotiations leading to the global, non-discriminatory and

verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified period of time. Ethiopia, which attached importance to the Agency's role in implementing the safeguards regime, also called on all States party to the NPT to work towards total elimination of nuclear arsenals as part of their commitment to Article VI of the Treaty.

146. Finally, a peace deal had been struck between Ethiopia and Eritrea without third-party involvement. The two countries had taken steps to bridge historical divides and erase decades-long animosity, and had restored diplomatic relations, re-opened embassies, and trade and transportation links had already resumed.

147. Ms VOJINOVIĆ (Montenegro) said that since joining the Agency in 2006, her country had established the prerequisites for the implementation of international and EU standards for radiation protection and nuclear safety and security, and had established its first central radioactive waste storage facility. Those activities had received Agency support through national and interregional technical cooperation projects, and she expressed appreciation for the comprehensive technical assistance towards establishing and further developing a regulatory infrastructure framework, based on international standards and principles. Montenegro also expressed appreciation for the Agency's support in the field of oncology and in improving nuclear medicine capacities.

148. Montenegro was well prepared to participate in the next phase of EU energy policy negotiations on the topic of nuclear safety and security, and radiation protection, and was in the process of drafting a new law on ionizing radiation protection and radiation and nuclear safety and security, which would be in line with Agency safety standards and the EU *acquis*.

149. Montenegro's recent accession to NATO was of great importance and would facilitate closer cooperation with the Agency.

150. Montenegro was committed to further strengthening its national safety and security framework by implementing international instruments and fostering cooperation in the medical sector, upgrading the regulatory framework infrastructure, and enhancing the level of the environmental protection and radiation protection. It paid particular attention to strengthening its national security framework by implementing international instruments and fostering cooperation on preventing terrorism and the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material, and it participated in numerous non-proliferation and knowledge management initiatives on the illicit trafficking of chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear substances and weapons in South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

151. Montenegro had supported the initiative for the establishment of a South-East European International Institute for Sustainable Technologies, which aimed to promote collaboration between science, technology and industry, and to provide platforms for the education and training of young scientists and engineers based on knowledge and technology transfers from European laboratories, such as CERN.

152. Mr SOUEID'AHMED (Mauritania) said that his country commended the positive role played by the Agency in promoting world peace and security and supporting the economic and scientific development of Member States through peaceful uses of nuclear energy based on humanitarian values.

153. Mauritania appreciated its fruitful cooperation with the Agency in the areas of health, nutrition, water, agriculture, veterinary medicine, combating the smuggling of dual-use material, and transit and border security.

154. Although the scale of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Mauritania was limited, Act No. 009/2010 concerning uses of nuclear energy promulgated on 20 January 2010 and its implementing regulations constituted an effective first step towards the establishment of a legislative and regulatory framework for peaceful nuclear activities. Following its enactment, the National

Authority for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety and Security had been established pursuant to Decree No. 082/2010. The Authority, which was composed of various sectors and institutions, was entirely independent in administrative and financial terms. It was tasked with coordinating and working in tandem with national and international bodies operating in the nuclear sector and with governmental sectors engaged in the implementation of nuclear power projects.

155. Mauritania had ratified numerous conventions and other instruments on nuclear energy, which concerned matters such as assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency, nuclear waste management and radiation protection. A comprehensive national plan had also been elaborated on assistance in radiation protection. A national capacity building strategy on nuclear safety was being developed and rapid steps were being taken to produce Mauritania's third national cooperation programme with the Agency for the period 2019–2021.

156. Acting on its belief in collective responsibility, Mauritania was working with allies and friendly countries on a framework bringing together organizations and institutions operating in the area of nuclear safety and security in the Group of Five for the Sahel and Senegal. They had held their first conference in Nouakchott on 24 and 25 July 2018, the aim being to establish a platform for sharing expertise in the area of nuclear energy applications.

157. Mauritania reaffirmed its confidence in the important role played by the Agency in promoting a spirit of cooperation with developing countries in order to support human resource capacity building and knowledge. It also reaffirmed its support for initiatives and guidelines aimed at actively involving the Agency in scientific research and monitoring activities in support of the development and welfare of societies and peoples throughout the world. Furthermore, Mauritania would never become involved in any non-peaceful use of nuclear technology.

158. Mr MDOE (United Republic of Tanzania), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery, thanked him for his work in implementing the Agency's mandates.

159. The projects to be funded under Tanzania's new CPF for 2018–2022 were an integral part of the sectoral priorities in the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, Zanzibar Vision 2020 and the Second Five Year National Development Plan 2016–2021. He expressed hope that the resources to be provided would facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the TC programme between the country and the Agency under the new TC cycle, which would continue to focus on end-user oriented activities with a visible socio-economic impact.

160. Tanzania was pleased to note that the theme of the 2018 Scientific Forum was Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation and recognized that nuclear science and technology could play a vital role in addressing the challenges of climate change following the adoption of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

161. His country valued the Agency's long-standing commitment to supporting Tanzania in delivering nuclear technology for development, in particular in the fields of agriculture, livestock development, health, water resource management, mining, 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. Furthermore, the country's scientific and technological experts in those fields, including energy technology, were crucial in order to expand and improve research and implementation tools for poverty alleviation.

162. Cancer continued to be a national challenge and, in tackling that problem, his Government recognized the need for partnership with the Agency to achieve the strategic goals of its National Cancer Control Strategy. It welcomed the considerable assistance it had received from the Agency in the fields of nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and human resource development. The Agency had recently procured

a brachytherapy machine for the Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza, which had allowed the country to open a second cancer centre; two linear accelerators and a CT simulator had also been installed at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute in Dar es Salaam.

163. To develop human resources for the sustainable application of nuclear science and technology and through training and capacity building, his Government had launched a national TC project to establish a Graduate School of Nuclear Science and Technology at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology in Arusha, with the aim of improving the contribution of nuclear science and technology to the SDGs. The school would act as a hub for coordinating nuclear technology research and development activities and would be linked with users such as public and private institutions and national and international businesses and services.

164. Tanzania fully supported the AFRA programme and remained convinced that the efforts to strengthen nuclear technology applications would be enhanced in the region. He thanked those Member States that provided extrabudgetary funding to ensure the success of programmes under the PUI and encouraged other international partners to join the Initiative.

165. Mr FOO (Singapore) said that significant developments in the past year could have far-reaching implications for the Agency's work. After having conducted a series of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches in 2017, the DPRK had resumed direct talks with the Republic of Korea in 2018. Chairman Kim Jong Un and the President of the Republic of Korea, Moon Jae-in, had held two summits in 2018 already, and planned to hold another on 18 September 2018 in Pyongyang.

166. In June 2018, Singapore had hosted the summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un. His country also welcomed the Panmunjom Declaration and the joint statement between the USA and the DPRK, as well as the DPRK's stated commitment to complete denuclearization and its pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests. Singapore hoped that the summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un would be the first step in the journey towards lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. While such positive developments were encouraging, Singapore urged all concerned parties to continue to engage in dialogue and take concrete steps to implement the joint statement. Singapore also called upon the DPRK to fulfil its international obligations, including those set out in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and to return to full compliance with the NPT. Singapore took its own obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions seriously and would continue to implement them fully and faithfully.

167. While the USA had withdrawn from the JCPOA in May 2018, the Agency had continuously verified the Islamic Republic of Iran's implementation of all its nuclear-related commitments under the plan and the absence of any diversion of declared nuclear material. Singapore acknowledged and welcomed Iran's continued provisional application, pending its entry into force, of the additional protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement, as well as the complementary access inspections of all sites required by the Agency.

168. Singapore had consistently maintained that the JCPOA played an important role in the international non-proliferation architecture. It also noted that the remaining parties to the JCPOA had continued to reaffirm their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the plan as long as Iran continued to fulfil its nuclear-related commitments. Singapore encouraged Iran to continue upholding its obligations under the JCPOA and provisionally applying the additional protocol, and to cooperate fully with the Agency and all relevant international partners, thereby reassuring the international community of the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities. Singapore also urged all parties to the JCPOA to continue their dialogue to sustain the internationally negotiated agreement.

169. While serving on the Board of Governors from 2016 to 2018, Singapore had aimed to make a constructive contribution, particularly regarding matters of nuclear safety and security, and technical

cooperation. Singapore had consistently advocated the enhancement of the Agency's Safety Requirements, for example by incorporating the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident and the principles of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. Singapore had also called on the Agency to ensure that its nuclear safety guidance documents remained up-to-date in accordance with the latest innovations in nuclear technology, in particular those related to SMRs and transportable nuclear power plants.

170. Singapore had consistently underscored the importance of strengthening nuclear security, as any loss or theft of nuclear or radioactive material could lead to serious consequences, including nuclear and radioactive terror attacks. Consequently, Singapore had supported the Agency's campaign to promote the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Amendment to the CPPNM.

171. Singapore also supported the Agency's efforts to develop nuclear security guidance on computer and information security, and in assisting Member States in strengthening their cyber defences, as nuclear installations could be targets of major cyberattacks.

172. Singapore had consistently called on the Agency to provide sufficient technical assistance to developing countries, particularly small States and LDCs, to help them achieve the SDGs. Its calls had been supported with contributions through the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme. While a member of the Board, Singapore had conducted regional workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and response, nuclear regulatory law, and food safety, and had hosted 11 training fellowships; after stepping down from the Board, it would continue to play an active and constructive role supporting the Agency's work.

173. ASEANTOM, which Singapore was chairing in 2018, had recently adopted a five-year work plan that included the establishment of a harmonized assessment and decision-making protocol during a nuclear or radiological emergency. ASEANTOM was working with the Agency to finalize the draft ASEAN-IAEA Practical Arrangements by the end of 2018, thereby deepening its institutional links and cooperation with the Agency.

174. In 2018, the Agency had dealt very well with challenging developments, for example, in relation to Iran and the DPRK, and had improved its administrative processes and efficiency through results-based management, initiatives such as the one-house approach, and better interdepartmental coordination.

175. Singapore urged Member States to do their best to foster trust, promote dialogue and strengthen cooperation in the Board of Governors and General Conference, and to guard against unnecessarily politicizing the Agency's agenda.

176. Mr ALI ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran), exercising his right of reply, said that he wished to respond to inaccurate statements by the Israeli delegation about Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. The Director General had informed the Board 12 times and reported to General Conference that Iran was fully implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.

177. Israel was attempting to disguise its own record of non-compliance with all international norms and standards related to the non-proliferation regime, had openly developed nuclear weapons and was not a State Party to the NPT. Additionally, Israel's nuclear activities were not under effective IAEA safeguards. Israel had been attempting to disrupt the Agency's work for decades, and continued to do so now despite the Director General's confirmation that Iran's nuclear activities were fully under Agency safeguards and remained peaceful. The representative of a regime that had developed nuclear weapons and whose activities were not under Agency safeguards was blatantly making baseless

accusations, even reprimanding the Agency for simply fulfilling its mandate in declaring that Iran was in full compliance with its obligations.

178. The majority of Member States had recognized the significance of the JCPOA as an example of successful multilateral diplomacy and had expressed support for its implementation and preservation. Only a few, the Israeli regime in particular, had made destructive statements and had attempted to destroy that achievement. However, those efforts could not mask the real threat to international peace and security represented by Israel's nuclear weapons programme.

179. Mr KIRAKOSSIAN (Armenia), exercising his right of reply, said that Azerbaijan's statement had been provocative and meaningless. It was regrettable that that candidate for the Board of Governors had made yet another attempt to mislead the international community and deviate from the pressing issues under consideration.

180. The statement by Azerbaijan had contained erroneous references to Armenia that were exclusively based on distorted information and groundless allegations. It could have been disregarded as anti-Armenian propaganda on the part of Azerbaijan, had it not been for the references to the safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant (ANPP). The ANPP had always had an excellent record of safety and close cooperation with all relevant Agency structures. The decision to extend its lifetime had been taken following thorough consultations with the Agency and its international partners, with a strong emphasis on ensuring safety and security. Furthermore, Armenia cooperated closely on a regular basis with international organizations and partner countries with regard to all nuclear energy issues. In particular, numerous Agency on-site inspections and assessment missions had reaffirmed Armenia's commitment to implementing its international obligations and the highest level of openness and transparency. No non-compliance or deviation from the requirements of international treaties had been recorded.

181. As a responsible member of the international community and strong supporter of non-proliferation policies, Armenia reaffirmed its full compliance with the NPT and other relevant treaties, as well as its Agency safeguards agreement and additional protocol.

182. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic), exercising his right of reply, said that he was responding to the statement by the delegation of Israel that Syria constituted a great threat and posed a danger of nuclear proliferation. That was inaccurate and misleading.

183. Israel, which possessed a great arsenal of chemical and nuclear weapons, constituted a major threat to the region and the world. The representative of Israel had had the audacity to refer to violations, when in fact it was his own country that violated international law and standards. Israel's aggression that had targeted the sovereign territory of Syria in 2007 bore witness to that, as did a number of other violations and aggressions perpetrated, needless to say, in the occupied Arab territories.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.