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President: Mr GHARIB ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Later: Mr VELTZÉ MICHEL (Plurinational State of Bolivia)

Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia)

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Abbreviations used in this record

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AMRAS	Advisory Mission on Regulatory Infrastructure for Radiation Safety
ARASIA	Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CNESTEN	National Centre for Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technology
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
HEU	high enriched uranium
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LEU	low enriched uranium
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
ORPAS	Occupational Radiation Protection Appraisal Service
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
RANET	Response and Assistance Network
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
USA	United States of America
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

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

1. Mr Ó RIAIN (Ireland), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery, commended the Agency as an exemplar of effective multilateral cooperation at a time when such cooperation was under strain. The Agency's work across the spectrum of nuclear energy, safety and security was indispensable and played a crucial role in managing the international system of safeguards under the NPT in a transparent, professional and effective manner that enjoyed the confidence of Member States.
2. Ireland was fully committed to working with international partners to make progress in implementing the NPT. Its three pillars were interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and his country welcomed General Conference resolution GC(61)/RES/9, adopted by consensus, which drew attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament and stressed that the latter was critically needed. The implementation of the NPT nuclear disarmament obligation remained unsatisfactory. Regrettably, existing commitments had not been fulfilled and were being called into question by the words and actions of some States. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons met the need to strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime by complementing and reinforcing the NPT. Providing a legal framework for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT and strengthening the Agency safeguards system, it reaffirmed the safeguards standard enshrined in NPT Article III, obliged States which already had a higher standard in place to maintain it, and encouraged all States to further raise their level of commitment in terms of safeguards. The new instrument strengthened the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the treaties establishing NWFZs and the CTBT.
3. While Ireland did not use nuclear power, it greatly valued the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, including their potential to contribute to attaining the SDGs. Ireland remained a strong supporter of the TC programme, including through the TCF and the PUI. It welcomed the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology. Where countries chose to use nuclear technologies, and in particular nuclear power, safety and security were essential.
4. The JCPOA represented an outstanding achievement of multilateral diplomacy, and his country called on all parties to implement all aspects fully and effectively.
5. The DPRK's nuclear tests constituted the only breach in the twenty-first century of the global norm against nuclear testing. Ireland welcomed the inter-Korean summit and was encouraged by the direct talks between the DPRK and the USA. However, those talks must be matched by action, and he urgently called on the DPRK to return to the NPT and to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.
6. It was particularly regrettable that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had been unable to make any meaningful progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East through arrangements freely arrived at by all the States of the region. That would bolster the NPT and strengthen international peace and security.
7. As an island State, Ireland had a particular interest in the promotion of greater communication on the maritime transport of nuclear material through the Dialogue between Coastal and Shipping States. As it assumed the role of coordinator of the coastal States group, it looked forward to continuing its cooperation with the new coordinator of the shipping States, France, and to the organization of a

workshop in 2019 to draw lessons from the useful table-top exercise organized by Portugal in 2017. The Dialogue was open to all Member States, and he thanked the Agency for supporting it.

8. Ireland continued to contribute across the broad spectrum of Agency activities and would participate in the Nuclear Security Contact Group and RANET for the first time in 2018. Its financial contributions to PACT, however, would be suspended until the managerial and other problems identified by the OIOS had been resolved.

9. He welcomed the Director General's undertaking to achieve gender parity in the senior management team by 2021. Gender equality was not a women's issue but an organizational one. Diversity delivered better decision-making, which was particularly relevant in the present context. The continued and intensified pursuit of gender mainstreaming would be important to the Agency's efforts in promoting the SDGs.

10. He commended the Agency's launch of its website in all official UN languages in 2018, given the importance of multilingualism in informing the global public about the Agency's vital work.

11. Ms TER HOEVE-VAN HEEK (Netherlands) said that her country attached the highest priority to strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone, as a matter fundamental to international peace and security. Without a robust and effective system of verification, the regime could not exist. The Agency's role therefore remained crucial and it must be assured of the ability and tools required to carry out that essential function effectively and efficiently.

12. The Agency had repeatedly demonstrated that it was up to the task, preparing for and adapting to changing circumstances. The Netherlands commended and continued fully to support the Agency's role in verifying the nuclear-related commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the JCPOA. The most recent report showed again that Iran was verifiably meeting those commitments. Her Government strongly encouraged continued commitment to, and full implementation of, the JCPOA. The Netherlands also commended the Agency for maintaining its readiness to send inspectors to the DPRK at short notice.

13. To support the Agency's role in providing assurances against nuclear proliferation, the safeguards system must be continuously strengthened. The Netherlands strongly supported the universalization of the additional protocol, which, together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement, constituted the current verification standard under the NPT. In view of the need to recognize and address the mounting safeguards burden, her country supported the implementation and further development of State-level approaches as a reflection of the need for a safeguards system that was responsive to change and as a means of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the safeguards regime.

14. Her country fully supported the Agency's central and coordinating role in strengthening nuclear security worldwide. The Agency should be in a position to carry out its nuclear security tasks effectively. While the Netherlands continued to contribute to the NSF, it emphasized the need for sustainable and reliable funding and the allocation of sufficient Regular Budget funds to the nuclear security programme. It called on all States to become party to and fully implement the Amendment to the CPPNM, along with other nuclear security instruments. The CPPNM review conference to be held in 2021 would provide an important opportunity to evaluate the implementation and adequacy of the Convention, and she called on the Agency to launch the preparatory process as soon as possible, encouraging all parties to engage actively. Nuclear security could be strengthened both nationally and on an international scale if countries implemented the Nuclear Security Fundamentals and recommendations in their national laws and regulations. The Joint Statement on Strengthening Nuclear Security Implementation set out in INFCIRC/869 was open to all Member States.

15. The production of medical isotopes was an important peaceful application of nuclear energy. As one of the largest producers of such isotopes in the world, the Netherlands was proud to have completed the conversion of its reactors from HEU to LEU in 2018. It now used LEU for both fuel and targets, thereby fulfilling a commitment made at the highest political level during the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit. Her country encouraged other States to similarly promote the minimization of the use of HEU in civilian applications.

16. The Netherlands continued to work to improve its robust domestic framework for nuclear safety and would host an IRRS follow-up mission later in 2018. Even with stringent safety systems in place, incidents could occur, and their consequences would be felt beyond national borders. For that reason, it was essential to share information through Agency reporting mechanisms, in the interests of transparency and public trust.

17. The Netherlands recognized the valuable contribution of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to the attainment of the SDGs and remained a strong supporter of the TC programme. It continued to pay its full target share to the TCF on time and called upon all Member States to do likewise, thereby enabling the Agency to help countries fulfil their ambitions in the field of nuclear technology and development.

18. The Agency played a fundamental role in helping to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards and in facilitating international cooperation. Her country attached importance to the efficiency and effectiveness of all the Agency's activities, which could be facilitated by applying a one-house approach. While steps had been taken, the Agency would benefit from further efforts to improve gender balance among staff members, with more women in Professional and management positions.

19. Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico) said that her country recognized the Agency's significant track record and current international importance and, as a steadfast promoter of disarmament and non-proliferation, supported its commendable dissemination and transfer of peaceful nuclear applications and technology to further the social and economic development of Member States.

20. In May 2018, Mexico had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Thanks to its commitment to the physical protection of nuclear materials and to international technical cooperation, Mexico implemented the relevant recommendations and best practices, and in 2017 had published regulations for the safe transport of radioactive materials in Mexico.

21. Following its approval in March 2018 for certification under ISO 29990 on learning services for non-formal education and training, Mexico's National Nuclear Research Institute had provided national and regional courses on the safe management and transport of radioactive sources for countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and also for public institutions and private enterprises in Mexico.

22. In 2018, to strengthen the exchange of experience and best practice in safe and sustainable nuclear power generation, Mexico and the Agency had co-sponsored seven regional courses for experts from Mexico and other countries on planning and financial optimization of nuclear projects; evaluating nuclear power systems; better regulating ageing programmes for nuclear facilities; improving transport inspection for radioactive material; physical protection of nuclear installations; managing emergencies; and leadership in nuclear and radiation safety.

23. From 2013 to 2018, Mexico had carried out 20 national projects under the Agency's TC programme that were in line with its development goals and achieved synergies among its academic and research institutions. Mexican professionals had also gained valuable experience and knowledge from some 30 regional projects on topics of shared interest.

24. Since 2016, Mexico's regional centre for public health research had made great progress in the use of the SIT for mosquito control, making the country a hub for reference and knowledge creation.

25. She thanked the Agency for its recent imPACT mission to Mexico, which had greatly helped to improve the diagnostic, preventive, treatment and palliative care services in a country seriously affected by cancer: some 80 000 cases were seen annually.

26. The country's capacity, developed over recent years with Agency support, had led to the designation of the National Nuclear Research Institute as an IAEA Collaborating Centre for the safe operation, maintenance and upgrading of gamma irradiation facilities, with the aim of training technicians from Mexico and elsewhere in the use of radiation technologies for health and environmental care.

27. Mexico was grateful to the Agency for its help in dealing with the consequences of the earthquakes that had struck in 2017.

28. Having assumed the presidency of ARCAL in May 2017, Mexico had succeeded in optimizing the organization's resources and raising its financial implementation rate to over 92%. Ten new projects had been approved for the 2020–2021 cycle, focusing on food security, human health, nuclear power, and radiation technologies.

29. As co-chair with Australia of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear, Mexico commended the Agency on the progress it was making towards greater gender equality in the Secretariat.

30. Mexico also welcomed the progress made in signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: in just over a year, 60 States had signed the Treaty and 14 had ratified it, including Mexico. She urged those States that had not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty as a matter of urgency so as to strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

31. Mexico hoped that negotiations on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would progress further and appreciated the Agency's readiness to resume its safeguards activities in the DPRK.

32. Noting that the Director General had reported that Iran was in full compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA, Mexico hoped that the situation would not change and called for responsible consideration and continued compliance among all the original signatories.

33. Mexico was undergoing a change of government, which testified both to the strength of its democracy and to its desire to be a fair, safe and prosperous nation. Its collaboration with the Agency was rooted in that context and in its responsible foreign policy and commitment to international cooperation, particularly within its region, with a view to achieving the SDGs set out in the 2030 Agenda.

34. Mr STAVROU (Cyprus) commended the Agency on its achievements in non-proliferation, in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security framework and in promoting international cooperation to assist States with capacity building and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

35. Cyprus had signed all the major international treaties and conventions relating to nuclear safety and security and was committed to their implementation. It underscored the importance of the NPT as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and pledged to work with partners both regionally and internationally towards achieving the entry into force of the CTBT.

36. Cyprus highly valued the capacity of the Agency's TC programme to enhance the responsible development of peaceful nuclear applications and appreciated the Agency's role in contributing to the attainment of the SDGs. Over the years, Cyprus had benefited from the transfer of knowledge and

expertise through various TCF-funded projects and had hosted a number of Agency workshops and training courses, including several in the past year. It looked forward to supporting more such projects.

37. Cyprus would continue in its efforts to maintain and strengthen radiation, transport and waste safety, emergency and preparedness response, and radiation protection. It had proposed three new projects over the coming two TC cycles intended to strengthen its safety infrastructure and legislative and regulatory framework, as well as build competence in several areas related to the radiation safety of installations and the protection of workers, the public and the environment from the use of ionizing radiation. During the current session of the Conference, Cyprus would sign a new CPF with the Agency.

38. The current revision of Cyprus' regulatory and legislative framework took due account of the recommendations of an IRRS peer review mission held in Cyprus in 2017, which had also prepared a four-year action plan. Cyprus had requested an ARTEMIS review mission for 2020.

39. The national radiation emergency preparedness and response plan had been aligned with the relevant Agency standards in the light of the Fukushima accident. In the past year the Cyprus Regulatory Authority had held exercises for all stakeholders in the plan and taken part in several international exercises, all with the support of the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre. The Agency had helped to upgrade the Regulatory Authority's information system.

40. Cyprus received continual support from the Agency for cradle to grave management of its sealed radioactive sources, in particular legacy disused sources.

41. Cyprus was working to further enhance its safety culture through an integrated management system for its Regulatory Authority, greater use of a graded approach to regulatory control and further improvements to radiation security and emergency preparedness and response. Education and training in safety culture were being extended to all relevant agencies.

42. Cyprus had no nuclear power or research reactors and did not plan to include nuclear in its energy mix in the foreseeable future. It nevertheless recognized the importance of the Agency's nuclear safety and security standards in ensuring safety worldwide and urged all Member States to strive for the highest standards of safety and security in their nuclear facilities, to protect both their own State and neighbouring countries.

43. Given the transboundary nature of the impact from a nuclear accident, international and regional cooperation was of the utmost importance to nuclear safety and security. Transparency, public information and consultation with neighbouring States likely to be affected by radioactive emissions from an accident were imperative, including provision of information on nuclear facilities at the design stage and throughout their operational lives.

44. No Member State should underestimate the risks to nuclear security in a world in which terrorist attacks, loss of control or a cyberattack could not be excluded beyond reasonable doubt. Cyprus called on all Member States to cooperate across regions to exchange relevant information.

45. Ms PLEJIĆ MARKOVIĆ (Croatia) said that her country was committed to further assisting the strengthening and promotion of multilateral efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and therefore fully supported the NPT and the CTBT. The pressures placed on the multilateral architecture over the past turbulent year had shown that the benefits of multilateral approaches made in parallel outweighed any constraints.

46. Croatia would continue to support the Agency's important and critical work of verification and monitoring in the context of the JCPOA and encouraged further dialogue between the Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure that the latter fulfilled its nuclear-related commitments. Croatia would continue to work with its EU partners and the international community to ensure that the deal was upheld.

47. Croatia was encouraged by the positive developments on the Korean Peninsula. Further progress would require serious engagement by the DPRK in all areas.

48. Croatia's nuclear energy programme, almost 50 years old, was shared with neighbouring Slovenia. The Krško NPP, co-owned and operated by the two countries, was stable and produced positive economic and environmental results. The fact that the two countries were surrounded by some 40 nuclear plants with over 80 reactors had a strong effect on their safety, security and non-proliferation policies.

49. Nuclear energy continued to play a major role in the stable and carbon-free supply of electricity to the Croatian public and industry. The highest safety and security standards were observed in that process.

50. Croatia's bilateral and regional nuclear cooperation focused on continuous engagement with neighbouring countries in the form of agreements for the early exchange of information in the event of a radiological emergency. Additional agreements were under consideration to establish lines of communication with the regulatory bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia on cooperation in radiology and nuclear security.

51. Croatia implemented integrated safeguards over its nuclear material and was bound by the arrangements applicable to EU members regarding implementation of an additional protocol. Earlier that week, the Croatian State Office for Radiological and Nuclear Safety had signed a five-year agreement with the United States Regulatory Commission on the exchange of information in nuclear safety matters, thereby further strengthening the two countries' longstanding cooperation. The Agency's recommendations from the latest IRRS mission to Croatia had resulted in harmonization of the relevant legislation.

52. Having carried out five TC projects concerned with nuclear medicine in the current cycle, Croatia had proposed three national and several regional projects for 2020–2021. In the current cycle it had hosted several fellowships and scientific visits for participants from Azerbaijan, Montenegro and Saudi Arabia.

53. In closing, she reaffirmed her country's support for the Agency's important endeavours in a challenging security environment and called on it to step up its efforts in gender mainstreaming and to increase women's representation in the Secretariat.

54. Ms RAYOS NATIVIDAD (Philippines) said that her country looked forward to further efforts to promote gender parity in the Agency's activities and reiterated the importance of a more balanced representation of developing countries in the Secretariat, particularly at the senior and policymaking levels.

55. Noting the growing demand for the Agency's technical assistance, the Philippines renewed its call for the provision of sufficient, adequate and predictable resources for the Agency's TC programme and for a better balance in the allocation of resources to the Agency's promotional and non-promotional activities.

56. The Philippines looked forward to the Ministerial Conference on nuclear science and technology to be held in November 2018 and thanked the co-chairs, Costa Rica and Japan, for their organizational efforts.

57. With regard to nuclear applications, the Philippines was particularly appreciative of the Agency's use of the SIT to control dengue-carrying mosquitoes and its initiatives to address human health issues, including Alzheimer's disease and cancer. It encouraged the Agency to further enrich its collaboration with the FAO and the WHO and to explore other such partnerships.

58. The Philippines commended the Agency on the progress achieved under the ReNuAL project and hoped that more Member States would come forward in support of the initiative.

59. Having recently suffered the ravages of Typhoon Mangkhut, and just before it rolled out a Philippine Nuclear Research Institute project that deployed nuclear technology to improve rice resistance to typhoons, the Philippines welcomed the theme of “Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation” chosen for the 2018 Scientific Forum.

60. Following an Agency mission in April 2018, the Philippines had updated its INSSP and was acting on the Agency’s recommendation to establish a nuclear security support centre. The Philippines nuclear programme was covered by a CSA and an additional protocol.

61. Recent events relating to the JCPOA and the further development of the DPRK’s nuclear programme had underscored the importance of the Agency’s safeguards activities. In respect of the DPRK issue, the Philippines, echoing the joint communiqué issued by ASEAN foreign ministers at their meeting in August 2018, welcomed the recent dialogue among the parties concerned and hoped that it would lead peacefully to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

62. Her country commended Singapore on its efforts to strengthen ASEAN’s relations with the Agency and welcomed the growing number of States electing to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complemented and strengthened the NPT.

63. In 2018 the Philippines was celebrating 60 years of Agency membership, which had significantly advanced nuclear science in the country. Following a successful visit in February by the Director General aimed at identifying national capacity requirements, an MOU had been signed with the Philippine Department of Science and Technology on the use of nuclear science and technology exemplars in the high school curriculum, based on a regional TC project. In May a visit by a high-level delegation to the Agency and the Seibersdorf Laboratories had helped her country’s legislature to deepen its understanding of the legal and practical aspects of Philippine–Agency cooperation.

64. In October 2018, her country would host a regional workshop on “Self-Assessment of Energy Emergency Preparedness and Response Arrangements against the IAEA Safety Standards”. The Philippines had submitted its self-evaluation report to the Agency and was preparing for an INIR mission later in the year, both of which would inform its proposed national policy for a nuclear power programme being developed by the Department of Energy.

65. In closing, she reaffirmed her country’s commitment to the Agency’s vision and goals and its full and positive engagement in Agency activities.

66. Ms GUARDIA DE RUBINOFF (Panama) said that 2017 had been highly productive for her country in the nuclear sphere. The country’s Vice-President had visited the Agency to evaluate options for strengthening its national regulatory body, and the Agency had conducted ORPAS and AMRAS missions in Panama as well as seven visits to assess its use of dosimetry in radiotherapy.

67. In November, Panama had signed an agreement on Practical Arrangements under which it would receive Agency assistance to strengthen the nuclear security measures for its hosting, in 2019, of a major event, World Youth Day. Panama was grateful for that valuable cooperation.

68. During the current TC cycle, Panama was engaged in two projects to strengthen its capacity in the use of nuclear applications and its national infrastructure. For the next biennium it had submitted projects related to nuclear safety, human health, and food and agriculture. In July, Panama had deposited its instrument of acceptance for the CPPNM. Those activities reflected its commitment both to the Agency’s TC programme and to its nuclear security and safety activities, which were important to developing countries and to the attainment of the SDGs.

69. The national strategic plan, 'Panama 2030', which aligned the country's interests with the SDGs, had been the first such plan in the region to which nuclear cooperation and technologies contributed. In August 2018, a meeting between the Minister of External Relations of Panama and the Agency's programme manager for Panama had resolved to harmonize the efforts of the country's nuclear institutions and to enhance the capacity and nuclear technology applied in mitigating the impact of chronic renal disease in Panama.

70. In 2017 Panama had signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which it considered to be a major milestone that addressed global concerns at the potentially disastrous human consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, and constituted an important and legally binding multilateral instrument for tackling global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Recalling that in 2017 Panama had also chaired the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, she urged all States to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

71. Mr MARAFI (Kuwait) said that his country greatly valued the IAEA Annual Report 2017 and commended the Director General and his staff for their efforts to promote the role of the Agency and enable it to harness nuclear energy to the best of its ability for the benefit of peace, health and prosperity.

72. Kuwait was working closely with the Agency to develop the necessary national nuclear energy capabilities and facilities to enable it to carry out vital socioeconomic development projects. It hoped to work ever closer with the Agency in that regard.

73. States had a fundamental right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and nuclear applications made an important contribution to prosperity and global development. As the Agency played a key role in that area, Kuwait had made a number of voluntary financial contributions, totalling some US \$13 million, to a number of Agency projects in recent years, including ReNuAL, the IAEA Environment Laboratories, the PUI and the LEU Bank.

74. With regard to the promotion of peaceful nuclear applications, Kuwait welcomed the efforts made to hold the first Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology in November 2018 and encouraged the Agency to continue to hold high-level meetings on that topic.

75. Kuwait accorded particular importance to technical cooperation activities. It therefore welcomed the efforts of the Division for Asia and the Pacific of the Department of Technical Cooperation, in particular the valuable visits that the Agency continued to conduct in Kuwait.

76. Kuwait condemned all nuclear tests and provocative behaviour that compromised human wellbeing and international safety and security, such as the nuclear tests carried out by the DPRK. It called on the DPRK to respect the relevant international treaties and Security Council resolutions.

77. Kuwait remained committed to upholding the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the DPRK issued in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Kuwait had taken a number of measures in that regard and welcomed the progress achieved at the various summits involving the Heads of State of the DPRK, the Republic of Korea and the USA. It hoped that such efforts would lead to greater stability on the Korean Peninsula.

78. Kuwait commended the Agency's efforts to implement the JCPOA in accordance with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). Kuwait was closely following all developments in that area and had welcomed the adoption of the JCPOA and its endorsement by the Security Council. The Islamic Republic of Iran needed to uphold all its responsibilities under the NPT and its comprehensive safeguards agreement. Although the JCPOA did not assuage all the concerns of countries in the region, in the spirit of cooperation and diplomacy Kuwait supported the JCPOA in the hope that it would improve regional and global stability.

79. Although Kuwait remained committed to upholding all Security Council resolutions, the reasons behind the USA's withdrawal from the JCPOA gave cause to reassess the approach taken so as to resolve all regional and international concerns regarding the agreement.

80. He underscored the importance of creating a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which would support regional stability and international peace and security. Kuwait therefore called on Israel to accede to the NPT, as it was the only State in the region not to have done so, and to place all its facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards.

81. Despite the fact that all States in the Middle East, in particular the State of Palestine, remained committed to implementing the NPT and their comprehensive safeguards agreements, Israel's obstinate refusal — despite possessing a nuclear programme that threatened safety and security in the region — to take any serious steps or measures to allow the Agency to apply comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East and establish a zone free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction had led to an increase in existing tensions and blatantly defied numerous international resolutions.

82. He reaffirmed Kuwait's support for the leading role that the Agency played and for the effective contributions that it made to sustainable development and to overcoming economic, financial and food emergencies in many countries.

Mr Veltzé Michel (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the chair.

83. Ms BERRO AMADEÏ (Monaco) said that frank and calm dialogue among all the Agency's Member States since its inception had been one of the key factors in its continuous presence at the heart of international nuclear cooperation and, accordingly, in its ability to promote the values of peace and humanism that underpinned its activities. Monaco pledged its support for that delicate mission in the years to come, including by paying its contributions to the TCF, in the conviction that the peaceful applications of nuclear energy could play a major role in sustainable development and in environmental matters.

84. In the face of the irrefutable impact of climate change on everyday life, the Agency's work was essential and must be promoted further. Monaco was convinced that the forthcoming Scientific Forum, focusing on how nuclear technologies could serve the climate, would strengthen knowledge, raise awareness and promote technical and scientific cooperation, thereby helping to ensure appropriate political decision-making. Monaco fully supported the Agency's activities in the application of nuclear techniques for climate research and conservation.

85. Reflecting the deep commitment of Prince Albert II to environmental protection, sustainable development promotion and combating climate change, Monaco had ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. In 2008 it had embarked on a proactive environmental policy and plan of action, including its Climate Energy Plan, which had won a European Energy Award, and a 2017 mission to involve the entire Monegasque community in projects to limit greenhouse gas emissions and develop renewable energies. The Principality aimed to reduce such emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

86. The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015 had rallied nations around a common cause, raising fresh hopes and strengthening awareness worldwide. Everyone, from decision makers to ordinary members of civil society, must strive to build on that process, which offered the best hope for mitigating the impact of humankind's activities on the environment and conserving the climate. Monaco was engaging with the Agency for the sake of defending the planet's priceless natural heritage, its sustainability and the survival of humanity.

87. Monaco looked forward keenly to the visit by the Director General in October to mark the twentieth anniversary of the new premises of the IAEA Environment Laboratories, which would provide an opportunity to further strengthen a partnership of which Monaco was very proud.

88. Mr TALON (Benin) said that the theme of the Scientific Forum would remain pertinent for a long time and was perfectly in tune with the initiatives that Benin had taken at local, national and international level to combat climate change and its consequences.

89. Benin had opted for innovative nuclear applications to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in various sectors. In agriculture, it applied the SIT to limit locust infestation and control other pests, had replaced fruit fly spraying with irradiation techniques, and used nitrogen labelling for soil fertilization and yield improvement. With regard to energy, the burning of fossil fuels was increasingly being supplemented by solar and wind power.

90. In seeking to adapt to climate change, Benin had established a strategy that would employ alarm systems and climate risk forecasting in relation to food security, aquaculture, water resource management and livestock protection. It would not hesitate to call on the Agency's expertise in those activities, all of which formed part of a balanced development policy designed to improve living standards.

91. Benin was very grateful to the Agency for the cooperation it had received under its CPF for 2017–2021. To date, Benin had reached an advanced stage in establishing a national radiological safety authority and had made good progress in improving soil fertility and increasing farmers' revenue; strengthening the capacity of its food safety laboratory, in particular for pineapples; soil improvement; and training national experts in nuclear medical applications.

92. The Benin National Assembly had reached an advanced stage in the process of ratifying a range of legal instruments concerned with nuclear safety and security, including the NPT.

93. Benin was grateful to all the partners that had contributed technical and financial assistance to its economic and social development, most recently in programmes to strengthen human and institutional capacity under the 2016–2017 TC programme cycle and the current CPF. All its institutions at every level would continue to work actively with the Agency to realize the potential and enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear applications.

94. Mr RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia) said that his country regarded the Agency as the main intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field. Colombia particularly appreciated the Agency's role in verifying the peaceful nature of Member States' nuclear activities. The Agency made a major contribution to international peace and security and to assisting Member States in attaining the SDGs and their individual development objectives in a wide range of energy and non-energy nuclear applications.

95. Colombia's safeguards agreement and additional protocol gave effect to its commitments under the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty. The latter's status as the pioneer treaty in the creation of NWFZs made it the political, legal and institutional reference point for the creation of new zones, an issue which Colombia considered to be of major importance, in keeping with the principles and guidelines set out by the Disarmament Commission in its report to the UN General Assembly in 1999 (A/54/42). To that end it had consistently supported relevant resolutions in the General Assembly and at the Agency.

96. Colombia had actively participated as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party in the preparatory meetings for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which had provided an excellent opportunity to reaffirm and update commitments made under the Treaty, strengthen the review process and reiterate support for full implementation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

97. Colombia strongly condemned the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches conducted by the DPRK and called on it to return to the Agency's safeguards system and commit itself to further dialogue aimed at denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

98. Concerning the Agency's valuable role in strengthening and promoting nuclear security worldwide, Colombia underscored the importance of ensuring an appropriate balance between its promotional and non-promotional activities in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Board of Governors and General Conference resolutions.

99. Colombia was grateful to the Agency for its support in completing its INSSP for 2018–2022. He also extended his country's appreciation to the US Department of Energy for its cooperation in the installation of security mechanisms at all Colombian nuclear facilities in hazard categories 1 to 3, following which Colombia had drafted related security regulations in line with Agency recommendations.

100. Colombia was preparing shortly to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to devise a training programme for on-site assessors and inspectors.

101. Colombia could look with satisfaction on its experiences of TC with the Agency, apparent in a number of successful projects involving nuclear medical applications, capacity building and the provision of expertise. He emphasized the importance of achieving convergence between national development strategies and the Agency's activities in areas of common interest.

102. Also important to Colombia were the activities developed within the framework of ARCAL, in particular those relating to capacity building in agriculture, food supply and environmental preservation.

103. In closing, he highlighted the constant efforts of FORO to maintain high standards of radiation protection and nuclear safety and security in Latin American countries. Colombia hoped that the existing synergy with the Agency would continue to allow FORO's results to be disseminated to all regions of the world in the interests of security, as a contribution to the Agency's statutory work and standards.

104. Ms VICTORIA-KRUSE (Dominican Republic) said that the Dominican Republic had signed most of the nuclear agreements and treaties adopted by the international community. Its Ministry of Energy and Mines was currently working with the Agency to strengthen the country's legal framework governing the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy.

105. Recently, as a nuclear-weapon-free State, the Dominican Republic had signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It considered that treaty to have strengthened the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT was the cornerstone.

106. Her country looked forward to implementing Agency TC projects that were aligned with its national development strategy and was currently finalizing its latest CPF with the Agency. It was also working to set up a national nuclear applications network, with the aim of fostering collaboration between national nuclear institutions and thus strengthening their capacities and making them more technically and financially sustainable.

107. Where health was concerned, the Dominican Republic had made significant progress in the provision of radiotherapy services using the latest cancer treatment technology. With regard to agriculture, it had also used nuclear technology, in the SIT, to combat the Mediterranean fruit fly. Thanks to the efforts of the Dominican Government and its partners, the country had been declared free of the fly in 2017. Her country was grateful for the Agency's assistance in that project, which had also created the capacity to extend the use of the SIT to eradication of the screwworm fly and had brought about changes in the national regulations on the reporting of myiasis.

108. The Dominican Centre for Export and Investment practised the country branding approach as a means of furthering national economic and commercial development. Accordingly, for the next TC cycle the Dominican Republic had proposed a capacity-building project focusing on the use of nuclear techniques to verify that products were of completely Dominican origin.

109. In the area of transport, as a coastal country located near a shipping lane for nuclear materials, the Dominican Republic was participating in the dialogue between coastal and shipping States. New national regulations for the safe transport of nuclear materials were being developed under the country's nuclear materials transport system, which had been designated a model network by the Agency.

110. With regard to regulation and safety measures, the Dominican Republic had made great progress in the management of radioactive waste; it possessed a storage facility for radioactive materials and disused sources that complied with all the Agency's safety requirements. The facility was undergoing technological improvements to enable it to process waste and disused sources.

111. The Dominican Republic acknowledged the contributions made by ARCAL, and had prepared a national action plan to promote the virtues of the Agreement and its benefits to the region among the country's nuclear and academic institutions, and to ensure that the nuclear sector gave ARCAL due recognition ahead of its 35th anniversary.

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

113. Mr SHARAN (Afghanistan) commended the Agency on the key role that it had played for over 60 years in promoting peace, health and prosperity for humankind through the peaceful use of nuclear technology. As the world drifted towards greater insecurity and violence, however, the Agency faced a tremendously challenging situation in monitoring and controlling nuclear energy fully and ensuring that it was not misused. Member States' cooperation with the Agency in that regard was essential in order to help build the necessary global consensus.

114. As a State Party to the NPT and one which had signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement, Afghanistan strongly supported the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, as a positive and complementary step towards achieving the nuclear weapons-free objectives of the UN.

115. The TC programme remained very important in supporting the peaceful, safe and secure application of nuclear science and technology for sustainable social and economic development, and appreciation was due for the Agency's efforts to align CPFs more closely with the specific needs and priorities of Member States. As a founding Member State, Afghanistan had benefited from excellent cooperation with the Agency since its establishment. Notwithstanding the country's many difficulties and conflicts over the past decades, it had benefited from the Agency's TC programme in recent years, in priority areas such as human health, water resources management, human resources development in nuclear physics, the establishment of a national regulatory framework and energy planning.

116. In particular, the Agency was supporting the Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission and other relevant national agencies in coordinating the implementation of projects, and providing training and capacity building for officials of various government institutions. In the area of health, with support from the Agency, Afghanistan hoped to complete projects on a radiation oncology centre, a radiology diagnostic centre and radiotherapy and radiology services in the next few years. The Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission was working closely with the Ministry for Mines to manage the country's natural radioactive sources, in particular at Qasab-e mountain in Kabul province.

117. The Nuclear Energy Act, drafted by the Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission with Agency support, had gained parliamentary approval and draft regulations for radiation safety in the areas of waste management, radioactive materials transport and radiation sources were being developed with technical support from the Agency. Such efforts would further improve the legal and regulatory framework, in particular the regulatory system for radiation safety and protection required for the application of nuclear science and technology in Afghanistan. In addition, the Afghan Atomic Energy

High Commission had made extensive efforts to license nuclear activities and monitor the use of ionizing radiation under the Nuclear Energy Act over the past two years, covering over 460 facilities in 19 provinces.

118. Afghanistan was seriously concerned about the illegal mining of radioactive materials on its territory, in particular uranium, by terrorist groups and mafias, together with the illegal transport of other nuclear materials used for non-peaceful purposes. It also feared that secret testing of nuclear weapons and the dumping of nuclear waste were occurring in areas of the country controlled by insurgent groups, to which the Government had no access. In the light of the obvious dangers to thousands of people's lives, Afghanistan requested other Member States to pay careful attention to such matters.

119. Afghanistan was grateful for the Agency's significant support of its scientists and national projects. It hoped that Member States, especially those in its region, would maintain their support in the areas of capacity building and training. It was imperative that all Member States should cooperate transparently and honestly to ensure that nuclear energy was used effectively to assist the Agency in promoting peace and security for all nations.

120. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had been one of the first States to accede to the NPT and that it continued to abide by its lofty aims and principles, which consisted primarily in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Syria also believed in the importance of international cooperation in that regard, since it helped to build Member States' capacities and facilitated their access to benefits.

121. The General Conference, as the Agency's top decision-making body, provided Member States with an important platform for discussing ways and means of confronting challenges to the Agency's role, enabling it to fulfil its statutory mandate in a fully independent, professional and impartial manner, and preventing any party from bringing pressure to bear on the Agency or from exploiting it to impose narrowminded agendas on certain States.

122. The Board of Governors agenda item on the implementation of the safeguards agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic was a typical example of certain States' exploitation of the Agency to serve their political agendas. Following an entire decade of denial, Israel's recent acknowledgement of its responsibility for the assault on Syrian territorial sovereignty should result in the condemnation of that iniquitous assault and action to compel Israel to cooperate with the Agency. The continuous discussion of the agenda item would serve no purpose so long as Israel, the aggressor, continued to decline such cooperation.

123. The Syrian Arab Republic had fully cooperated with the Agency in resolving all pending issues relating to the Dair Alzour site. Its cooperation had culminated in October 2011 in an agreement on a plan of action, which had been signed with the then Deputy Director General of the Department of Safeguards, the implementation of which had been impeded. In addition, the Agency's successive annual reports, most recently the report for 2017, had confirmed Syria's full compliance with its safeguards agreement.

124. Israel's continued possession of nuclear capabilities that were not covered by the NPT or a comprehensive safeguards agreement posed an enormous threat to the non-proliferation regime, generated deep concern among all States in the Middle East region and impeded the establishment of a zone free of all WMDs in the Middle East. Syria strongly condemned Israel's persistent disregard of resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities and the clear message that it conveyed from the international community. It also sharply criticized the flagrant double standards applied by certain influential Member States, including nuclear-power States, when it came to Israeli nuclear capabilities. They ignored Israel's possession of a huge nuclear arsenal that threatened the security and stability of the region and the world as a whole.

125. Syria welcomed Iran's compliance with the JCPOA, as repeatedly confirmed by the Agency's reports and its inspectors, and deplored the unilateral and unjustified decision by the USA to withdraw from the agreement. Its withdrawal constituted a flagrant breach of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and seriously undermined that exceptional diplomatic achievement.

126. The recent discussions in the Board concerning the Director General's report on the State-level approach to the implementation of safeguards had demonstrated the persistence of confusion, motives for concern and disparate views regarding the approach. The Secretariat should therefore continue to engage in an open dialogue with Member States, and the approach should not be implemented until the clear consent of each Member State had been secured.

127. Syria commended the role of the Agency's TC programme in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy in developing countries with a view to achieving the SDGs. Thanks to the tangible support of the Technical Cooperation Department, Syria had succeeded in implementing a considerable number of TC project components.

128. Syria was pleased to announce that it had deposited its ratification instruments for the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident with the Director General. It also continued to consider the possibility of ratifying other relevant conventions.

129. Syria actively supported the regional TC programme and the ARASIA Agreement. On 31 May 2018 it had deposited the ratification instrument for the updated Agreement. It hoped that the Agency would continue to support the Agreement in view of its major contribution to cooperation among the States Parties and to their acquisition of nuclear technology.

130. Mr BOUCHAARA (Morocco) said that, since joining the Agency in 1957, his country had striven for non-proliferation and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, while reaffirming the inalienable right of NPT States Parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for development, including through international cooperation overseen by the Agency. In connection with the Agency's statutory functions, Morocco attached particular importance to the TC programme, which played a vital role in training human resources, accumulating know-how and supporting technology transfer to countries in need, in particular in Africa.

131. In that regard, his country, which contributed regularly to the TCF and met its commitments, welcomed the recent signature of a CPF with the Agency for the period 2018–2023. That would bolster technical cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between Morocco and the Agency and would strengthen tripartite cooperation for the benefit of developing countries, including in Africa. Morocco reaffirmed its appreciation for its strong partnership with the Agency in the areas of health, water, agriculture, the environment and nutrition, and also safety, security and nuclear safeguards, and the overall promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear technologies and applications in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.

132. In order to implement Agency programmes, CNESTEN annually hosted some 60 scientific visits and training courses and some 30 expert missions, in addition to conducting several hundred laboratory analyses and organizing some 15 regional and international events. Following the signature of an arrangement with the Secretariat in 2018, CNESTEN had acquired the status of a regional centre for education and virtual training for the staff of African institutions through the Agency's Internet Reactor Laboratory, using Morocco's research reactor. With Agency support, Morocco had developed national expertise in various areas, which meant that it could now cooperate with the Agency in exchanging its experience with other Member States, in particular those in Africa.

133. Overall, Morocco remained committed to working closely with its partners to tackle the challenge of nuclear terrorism and to pursue the Agency's vision of the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. To that end, by ratifying the Amendment to the CPPNM in October 2015, it had now joined all the international conventions on nuclear safety and security. In addition, with the adoption of the act on nuclear and radiation safety and security and the creation of the Moroccan Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security Agency as its regulatory authority, Morocco had achieved an important milestone in strengthening its regulatory framework in line with Agency security standards.

134. Morocco had made significant efforts towards developing and maintaining a national nuclear safety and security infrastructure in line with its international commitments. In view of the challenges facing Africa, Morocco reaffirmed its commitment and readiness to share its experiences in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and development on a dynamic and united basis, as part of South-South and tripartite cooperation, including under AFRA. It had also signed a number of tripartite and bilateral agreements on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology agreements under AFRA.

135. Always ready to share its experience with all countries in Africa and beyond through South-South, mutual and sustainable cooperation, Morocco currently hosted five AFRA-designated regional centres of excellence. Thanks to Agency scientific and technical support, those ensured capacity-building and knowledge-sharing at the regional level in the areas of training, radiation protection, oncology, nutrition, water resources management and non-destructive industrial testing. Serving the African continent remained a strategic priority for Morocco within the Agency.

136. Equitable and sustainable peace could only be attained in the Middle East if all countries joined the NPT without exception, as hoped for by the entire international community. NWFZs represented a specific contribution to nuclear disarmament. Morocco had continually promoted adherence to the NPT and the conclusion of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency by all States in the Middle East including Israel, since such adherence was a significant prerequisite for establishing a climate of confidence and for the establishment of an NWFZ.

137. During its forthcoming term as a member of the Board of Governors, Morocco would continue to support the Agency's role in providing technical assistance to Member States and in promoting international cooperation on nuclear security. Morocco reaffirmed its strong desire to continue to promote the strengthening of the global nuclear security architecture. It would also continue to promote dialogue, negotiation and multilateral action in support of the Agency.

138. He expressed hope that the work of the current session of the General Conference would lead to any compromises necessary to supporting the Agency in carrying out its statutory activities.

Ms Žiaková (Slovakia), President, took the chair.

139. Ms WIJESEKERA (Sri Lanka) recalled the Director General's visit to Sri Lanka in 2018, during which constructive meetings had been held with a number of ministers and government officials, to explore ways of strengthening Sri Lanka's collaboration with the Agency.

140. The Government of Sri Lanka had decided to conclude the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement between Sri Lanka and the Agency, which had been endorsed by the Board of Governors at its latest meeting, and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by the Agency in nuclear security to strengthen local infrastructure and train Sri Lankan officials.

141. Sri Lanka's Atomic Energy Regulatory Council had taken a number of steps to strengthen the regulatory infrastructure with regard to safety, security and safeguards, to step up enforcement of the Atomic Energy Act and to draft ionizing radiation protection regulations and source security regulations in line with Agency model regulations, which were to be promulgated in 2020. In collaboration with the Agency, the Regulatory Council had also worked to increase awareness among stakeholders of the legal

and regulatory requirements for licensing nuclear power plants, and intended to amend the existing legislation to incorporate such requirements in line with international standards.

142. Sri Lanka highly valued the Agency's continued assistance to Member States in producing radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals through capacity building and the dissemination and transfer of knowledge, which contributed to improved health care and sustainable industrial development. Acknowledging the assistance received under the TC programme, Sri Lanka looked forward to further opportunities for such cooperation in the field of nuclear science and technology and welcomed the offer of technical assistance for the 2020–2021 TC cycle. Among projects selected for implementation in that cycle she highlighted the establishment of the medical cyclotron facility for the production of radiopharmaceuticals needed for molecular imaging techniques used in cancer patient management and the strengthening of the regulatory infrastructure for radiation safety and source security in Sri Lanka.

143. In addition, the essential infrastructure being developed in the former conflict area of northern Sri Lanka included a nuclear medicine unit, in the form of a radioimmunoassay laboratory, which was being installed at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Jaffna under the 2018–2019 TC programme. Technical assistance was also being provided for a project to enhance water resources management and the supply of drinking water in the country's dry zone. Great appreciation was expressed for the Director General's decision to send two experts on chronic kidney disease to Sri Lanka, in recognition of the disease's impact on the country. Sri Lanka looked forward to hosting the meeting of national representatives to the RCA, to be held in Colombo in 2019.

144. In conclusion, she thanked the Agency for its excellent cooperation in all aspects of its work and looked forward to continuing work with the Agency in the same spirit.

145. Mr BARNES (Jamaica) said that his country welcomed the Agency's support under the CPF, which would facilitate the attainment by Jamaica of its national development objectives and the SDGs, through nuclear technology transfer and technical cooperation. The previous month, the Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation had visited Jamaica to sign the CPF for 2018–2023, meeting key government stakeholders and visiting various sites, including the Nuclear Medicine Centre of the University of the West Indies. The visit underscored the longstanding relationship between Jamaica and the Agency, and the willingness of both sides to cooperate further.

146. Mindful that sustainable development would be out of the question were it not for multilateral and bilateral partnerships, Jamaica urged all Member States in a position to do so to continue contributing to the TCF, to ensure that the Agency had the necessary resources to meet the growing demand for assistance, especially in technology transfer.

147. Ever since joining the Agency in 1965 as the first English-speaking Caribbean country to join, Jamaica had continuously backed the organization's efforts to peacefully harness nuclear energy for sustainable development and also considered the Agency's work integral to the attainment of the 17 SDGs. As a significant beneficiary of the Agency's TC activities, Jamaica welcomed the drive to forge synergies between the Agency's assistance activities and Member States' national development priorities, within the broader scope of UNDAF. The value that Jamaica attached to ARCAL, an important regional TC mechanism, was reflected in its accession to the ARCAL Extension Agreement in May 2017.

148. Throughout its fifty-year relationship with Jamaica, the Agency had offered technical assistance in the fields of education, health and research including through the delivery of training courses, the implementation of PACT, capacity building in nuclear medicine and the conversion of the country's SLOWPOKE reactor from HEU to LEU fuel. That conversion programme was of utmost importance for the region, as Jamaica was home to the only research reactor in the Caribbean, located at the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences in Kingston. In addition, the resulting

doubling of the reactor's capacity would enable Jamaica to assist other Caribbean countries in their scientific endeavours.

149. The Jamaican Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences were liaising closely with the Agency to strengthen the region's regulatory infrastructure for an effective cradle-to-grave approach to the control of radioactive sources. Furthermore, in keeping with the country's commitment to use atomic energy for scientific and peaceful purposes, Parliament had passed the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Act and established the Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority in July 2015, with a view to regulating all activities, practices and facilities that used nuclear technology and gave rise to ionizing radiation.

150. Even though the nuclear threat posed by Jamaica and the other Caribbean Member States was negligible since they did not produce nuclear-related dual-use technology, their strategic location, porous borders and socioeconomic conditions made them a soft target for nuclear terrorism. As a State Party to the NPT, Jamaica reaffirmed its commitment to total disarmament in accordance with the Treaty's three pillars and urged States that had not yet done so to accede to legally-binding international conventions and to commit themselves in good faith to negotiations on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that spirit, it had signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 8 December 2017 and urged those countries which had not yet done so to follow suit.

151. In 2017, the Latin American and Caribbean region had marked the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, marking a significant milestone, given the Treaty's role in establishing the region as a NWFZ. Jamaica remained committed to prohibiting the use, storage and transport of nuclear weapons, in line with the Treaty, and to efforts to promote the value of NWFZs at the global level.

152. In closing, Jamaica commended the Director General on his leadership and vision and wished him a speedy recovery.

153. Mr ALZAYANI (Bahrain) commended the Director General on his efforts to strengthen the international role played by the Agency and to achieve its objectives in all areas. He welcomed the IAEA Annual Report for 2017, which revealed the magnitude of the international responsibilities with which the Agency had been entrusted and the hopes that had been pinned to its ability to create an appropriate environment for finding ambitious and effective solutions to the problems faced by the modern world, which was turning to technology and knowledge as a peaceful way of attaining the SDGs.

154. Although attainment of the SDGs was still a long way off, Bahrain remained hopeful that their attainment would usher in a new era free from war, including in the Middle East, where new wars flared up just as soon as old ones died down. The path to overcoming those challenges was long and difficult and would require tireless, widespread, collective efforts. In that context, Bahrain called for a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to be created in the Middle East and for the postponed 2012 NPT Review Conference to be held before the 2020 conference, in keeping with the relevant terms of reference.

155. The adoption of resolution GC(53)/RES/17, which called on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards, had demonstrated the concern held by the international community regarding Israeli nuclear capabilities. The Agency had a key role to play in achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as set out in its Statute, in particular as weapons of mass destruction posed a constant threat to humanity and to international peace and security. Bahrain supported the Agency's work to implement safeguards effectively, which was greatly helping to build trust in the Middle East, and to promote the adoption of important measures to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons.

156. While underscoring the right of all States to use nuclear energy and its applications for peaceful purposes, Bahrain urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency, submit all its nuclear facilities and activities to Agency monitoring and commit itself to applying nuclear safety and security guarantees so as not to jeopardize regional and international peace and security. In that connection, a harmonized global strategy was required with a view to developing a mechanism to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction both regionally and globally, but in particular in the Middle East.

157. Bahrain called on the Agency to do more to promote the exchange of nuclear knowledge and techniques between industrialized and developing countries and the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in order to achieve peace and security.

158. He expressed his country's gratitude for the valuable cooperation provided by the Agency, in particular in the areas of technical cooperation and capacity building, and for the highly professional manner in which the Agency had carried out joint projects. Bahrain had finalized its CPF, which it had signed with the Agency in May 2018, and had submitted its 2009–2018 report on its SQP, which it had concluded in 2009, and its report on the CNS.

159. Noting that 2019 marked the tenth anniversary of Bahrain joining the Agency, he reaffirmed his delegation's complete readiness to work closely with the Agency, make the most of technical cooperation activities and develop Bahraini skills and expertise in order to meet national development needs and support future projects that made use of nuclear science for the benefit of humanity.

160. In addition to many conferences, meetings and workshops held in the Asia and the Pacific region, Bahrain had also participated in the seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS, where it had presented its national report setting out the measures that it had taken to implement the Convention, including the laws adopted on radiation protection. The Government was currently developing a multimedia awareness-raising programme for that included weekly events and activities for national holidays and made use of social media and the internet.

161. Bahrain was confident that, through its discussions and the exchange of views between Member States, the General Conference would achieve its aim of ensuring that nuclear energy was used to promote peace, protect the environment and achieve sustainable development and security.

162. Mr GARCIA REYES (Guatemala) thanked the Agency for its support and show of solidarity during the disaster resulting from the eruption of the Fuego volcano in 2018. He also expressed appreciation to Japan for its work through the Agency to assist his Government in its recovery efforts in the aftermath of the disaster, which had greatly helped his country.

163. With regard to the technical cooperation work and results obtained in Latin America and the Caribbean under ARCAL, Guatemala intended to continue participating actively towards achieving the objectives of all the projects in which it was involved. It appreciated the Agency's work on the SIT in collaboration with Member States, in particular in Latin America and the Caribbean. It drew attention to the successful application of the technique in the Dominican Republic as evidence of the shared benefits of cooperation, which would support continuing activities to control and eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly in the region. Such facilities as the fruit fly sterilization laboratory in Guatemala helped in ensuring rapid application of the SIT in affected areas.

164. Both the Agency and developing countries benefited from reciprocal cooperation as both sides were enriched through the sharing of knowledge, techniques, experience and resources, with a direct positive impact on the inhabitants. For its part, Guatemala received technical cooperation from the Agency in the areas of health, nutrition, food, agriculture and the environment.

165. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology 2018 would provide a platform for highlighting the Agency's central role in nuclear science, technology and applications for peaceful purposes and in transferring them to Member States, and for increasing the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity, in line with its Statute.

166. In its conviction of the continued validity of the NPT, Guatemala promoted the universalization of the Treaty and full application of its provisions. Compliance with that Treaty was a legal obligation and all States Parties must confirm that they adhered to it in letter and spirit. His country also supported the CTBT and considered the moratorium on nuclear testing of paramount importance.

167. As a country located in a zone free of WMDs, Guatemala deplored any type of nuclear test and expressed concern about their potentially disastrous consequences. The only effective way to avoid such risks was the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. He therefore urged all States to act in accordance with the UN Charter and international law, to promote and uphold the rule of law and to be mindful of the responsibility to build a world free of WMDs that was more peaceful and safe for everyone. He thanked the Agency and its staff for all their professional and impartial work.

168. Mr SAO (Cambodia) said that his country was fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and to ensuring nuclear safety, security and safeguards at the national, regional and global level. Under the 1993 constitution and its subsequent amendments, Cambodia had prohibited the manufacture, use and storage of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

169. The Ministry of Mines and Energy was responsible for managing Cambodia's nuclear and radiation security and safeguards. Other ministries and agencies were also working with the Agency and other States on the legal application of nuclear and radiation technology, in the fields of health, industry and agriculture, and on the safety, security and safeguarding of nuclear materials and radiation sources.

170. TC projects on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in such aspects of agriculture as soil fertility, crop management and livestock production had been successfully implemented. The Agency had helped Cambodia to establish its National Cancer Centre, which had been inaugurated in January 2018, thereby facilitating capacity building in cancer treatment and nuclear medicine.

171. During the 61st regular session of the General Conference in 2017, Cambodia and the Agency had reached another milestone with the signature of the country's second CPF, for the period 2017–2023. Also in 2017, Cambodia and the Russian Federation had concluded an agreement on cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and an MOU had been signed between the Institute of Technology of Cambodia and Rosatom on dialogue, information exchange and communication in promoting nuclear science, technology and education in his country. Support provided by donors and partners had assisted Cambodia in meeting its development goals. His country was grateful for the Agency's timely support.

172. In closing, noting the contribution of cooperation to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and promotion of Cambodia's development, he appealed for more such programmes.

173. Mr MUSHAYAVANHU (Zimbabwe) said that, through its participation in the General Conference, Zimbabwe was able to scale up its cooperation with the Agency at both the technical and policy levels. To that end, it was engaging with the experts attending the current session to take stock of project implementation under the third CPF, which it had signed the previous year.

174. While Zimbabwe took primary responsibility for its own overall development, accelerated nuclear technology-related developments had only been possible thanks to the Agency's active assistance and support. The Agency had contributed tangibly and significantly in such areas as the early detection and management of cancer, ensuring food security by combating foot-and-mouth disease and tsetse fly

infestation, conduct of crop development and cattle artificial insemination programmes, and application of isotope hydrology techniques.

175. Reviewing success stories born out of Zimbabwe's cooperation with the Agency, he highlighted the Agency's dependable partnership which had bolstered the country's efforts to combat cancer. With the Agency's support, Zimbabwe's major referral hospitals had been equipped and staffed with specialized personnel trained in nuclear medicine.

176. In addition, the Agency was supporting his country's artificial insemination programme aimed at replenishing the national cattle herd, enhancing livestock disease control and boosting livestock production. Zimbabwe's development of a drought-tolerant cowpea variety, an achievement in which the country took great pride, had been made possible with technical and financial assistance from the Agency. Also through its cooperation with the Agency, Zimbabwe's regulatory infrastructure and radiation safety system had been strengthened. In that regard, his country looked forward to receiving an INSSP review mission later that year, along with an IRRS follow-up mission in 2019.

177. While the application of atoms for peace and development was celebrated and appreciated, nuclear weapons continued to jeopardize international peace and security. Notwithstanding the obligations of Member States under Article VI of the NPT to pursue negotiations in good faith, nuclear-weapon States had not only failed to demonstrate good faith, but had also taken measures to modernize their arsenals. Disarmament, non-proliferation and access to the peaceful applications of nuclear technology were mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT. In that connection, non-proliferation would only be sustained if commensurate progress were to be made in nuclear disarmament.

178. In closing, he noted the positive developments in Zimbabwe over the preceding ten months, following the establishment of a new political order, which had set in place conditions propitious to enhanced engagement with the Agency and the international community.

179. Mr KUMWEMBE (Malawi) expressed his country's appreciation for various development activities that the Agency had provided since the country became a Member State in 2006. Through the TC programme the Agency had supported Malawi's sustainable development in the areas of agriculture and food security; human health and nutrition; water resource management and development; energy; mining; industrial development; human resource capacity building in nuclear science and technology; nuclear and radiological security; and waste management.

180. Thanks to the Agency's TC support, Malawi had been able to establish its first radiotherapy centre in Lilongwe. Deaths from cancer were rising in Africa, including in Malawi. Approximately 15 000 cancer patients were treated each year in hospitals in Malawi, of whom some 60% needed radiation therapy not currently available in the country. The Government could afford to treat fewer than 35% of the cancer patients in need of treatment by sending them to other countries at great expense. Accordingly, in February 2017, Malawi had embarked on the construction of a cancer centre. The TC programme had provided Malawi with technical support for planning, construction, human resource development and procurement of equipment to enable the country to successfully establish and operate that centre. The TC programme had also enabled Malawi to establish and strengthen the regulatory authority for radiation safety and protection and for the security of radioactive sources; to improve systems for monitoring naturally occurring and anthropogenic radionuclides in food and the environment; to assess and manage water resources using isotope techniques; and to build its capacity to diagnose, prevent, and control animal diseases with an impact on public health.

181. Malawi was committed to implementing its comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol and would continue to meet its obligations under those agreements. It had also initiated the process of ratifying various conventions in order to enhance nuclear safety and security, including the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Convention on Early

Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Malawi had already expressed its support for the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

182. Malawi was committed to meeting its financial obligations to the Agency and had therefore exerted every effort to ensure that payments and subscriptions due to the Agency were made on time.

183. Mr NYAMVUMBA (Rwanda) said that radiation technology had a profound impact on economic development in Rwanda, in particular in the areas of health, agriculture, industry, science, technology and innovation. He expressed his country's sincere appreciation to the Agency for its support in ensuring the safe use of nuclear technology in Rwanda.

184. His country's journey towards regulating radioactive sources and materials had begun with its ratification of the Statute in 2011 and conclusion of a safeguards agreement in 2012. Rwanda had since adopted an act on radiation protection, which was helping it to achieve its economic and development goals of becoming a middle income country by 2035 and a high income country by 2050.

185. Rwanda was committed to meeting its obligations to the Agency, including by cooperating regionally and internationally to ensure radiation protection and by sharing best practices and experience with other Member States. He commended the Agency's continuous efforts to help Rwanda establish and strengthen its national legal infrastructure, improve its physical protection systems for nuclear security and bring its Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine Centre into operation. Rwanda looked forward to continued cooperation with the Agency to achieve the sustainable and safe use of nuclear technology and its applications.

186. Mr STEINMETZ (Luxembourg), said that projections in recent years had shown a clear increase in world energy demands. After a particularly warm summer in Europe due to global warming, humanity was striving to find the right solutions to meet its energy needs, even though viable and sustainable solutions already existed. Luxembourg was among the States in the international community opposed to nuclear energy and its promotion. His Government did not consider nuclear energy to be an option in combating greenhouse gas effects, nor did it view nuclear energy as a means of achieving the SDGs.

187. Over recent years a net growth in renewable energy and a constant decline in its production costs had been observable — meaning that the production cost of nuclear energy was less and less competitive. Luxembourg advocated the progressive elimination of nuclear energy production on the global level, accompanied by greater efforts to exploit renewable energy fully and to improve energy efficiency and energy saving. For that reason, for many years it had advocated the internalization of all nuclear costs within electricity costs, including those relating to waste recycling and infrastructure. For its own part, Luxembourg's long-term energy production plans centred on developing and extending more sustainable energy types.

188. States with recourse to nuclear energy must take into account the interests and objections of neighbouring countries, engage in open dialogue and transparent public communication, and share operational experience. For its part, his Government had prepared a bill on specific legal arrangements for the compensation of citizens and residents of Luxembourg in the event of a nuclear accident. He reiterated Luxembourg's categorical opposition to calls for the creation of a single global regime for civil nuclear responsibility. As desirable as such a global regime might be, the levels of compensation envisaged fell far short of the costs of damage potentially arising from a nuclear accident.

189. The risks and problems associated with nuclear energy should not be forgotten, in particular the undeniable potential for serious accidents with far-reaching and long-lasting health and environmental

consequences. In that context, his country insisted that States that had opted for nuclear energy should build, use, renew and dismantle their nuclear power plants in strict conformity with all relevant international conventions and relevant safety and security norms.

190. Nuclear safety remained a constant challenge: ageing nuclear power plants and waste presented undeniable risks to the environment. In that regard, he recalled the commitments made by all Contracting Parties upon their adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. Luxembourg encouraged the Director General and his staff to maintain their efforts to continue improving nuclear safety. In that context, Luxembourg had received an IRRS mission in 2018 and would host an ARTEMIS mission the following week.

191. Luxembourg was also determined to reinforce nuclear security. The threat of unauthorized access to radioactive and nuclear sources remained a source of deep concern for his country, as did terrorist threats and cyberattacks. Luxembourg supported all efforts to enhance nuclear security norms. The Agency should fully play its role as a global platform for improvement in the area of nuclear security.

192. The concept of nuclear security was often viewed by a number of Member States as a hindrance to the free development of civil nuclear development programmes and technical cooperation projects. Luxembourg did not share that opinion; it maintained that the converse was true. For that reason, as a long-standing proponent of the Agency's technical cooperation programme, Luxembourg would also contribute to the Technical Cooperation Fund in 2019.

193. Since, overall, the use of nuclear energy for peaceful ends and the resulting demand had grown, and with it the number of facilities and amount of nuclear material in the world under Agency safeguards, the Agency's responsibilities had increased, but its resources had not increased proportionally. Given its budgetary limitations, the Agency should make full use of its verification responsibilities fully. The verification expertise at the Agency was indispensable for protecting the NPT.

194. The JCPOA had proved an exceptional accomplishment for international nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Since it had come into effect in January 2016, the JCPOA had considerably reduced the risk posed by Iran's nuclear programme and had mandated unprecedented follow-up and transparency measures. Luxembourg commended the Agency on its meticulous work in supervising Iran's commitments and welcomed the Agency's conclusions presented for the 12th consecutive time in the Director General's report, and would defend the full implementation of the agreement, provided that Iran continued to respect and implement its nuclear commitments.

195. He stressed the vital role that the Agency could play in verifying the nuclear programme of the DPRK. That country must fulfil all its international obligations, comply with Security Council and Agency resolutions and adhere to the NPT and implement a safeguards agreement with the Agency. Luxembourg allied itself with those who supported diplomatic efforts to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula by peaceful means, and welcomed the creation of a dedicated DPRK team within the Agency's Department of Safeguards.

196. His country fully supported peace and stability throughout the Middle East. It remained deeply concerned by the absence of cooperation and progress on outstanding issues concerning the Dair Alzour site and three other locations in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was disheartening that Syria had not yet shown the necessary cooperation and was continuing to refuse to provide the required information. Furthermore, Luxembourg reaffirmed its full support for the creation of an exclusion zone for weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, as agreed upon in the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

197. In conclusion, he reaffirmed that, for his country, the NPT would remain the only binding commitment for nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI. Luxembourg could not support any

measure that might weaken the NPT or that claimed to offer an alternative route towards a world free from nuclear weapons. To be able to fulfil its role by providing sound guarantees against nuclear proliferation, the Agency must be able to work in an impartial, independent and objective manner and all efforts to politicize its work unnecessarily were to be resisted.

198. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates) said that his country rejected the false accusations made by Iran. The crisis in Yemen was a direct consequence of Iran's supplying weapons and ballistic missiles to the Houthi militia, in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. In doing so, Iran had prolonged the war and exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The UAE considered that Iran's role in supporting terrorism in the region was well known and evidenced by its conduct over a number of decades. His country suggested that Iran scrutinize its own behaviour in order to understand what constituted terrorism.

199. The UAE's nuclear power programme had been developed in accordance with the most stringent safety and security standards and the country's non-proliferation obligations, as confirmed by ten major international review missions from the Agency, multiple Nuclear Safety Convention reviews, and the assessments of other relevant organizations, such as WANO. Iran's false accusations represented a desperate attempt to divert the Conference's attention from that country's own shortcomings.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.