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President: Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico)

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¹ GC(63)/22.

Abbreviations used in this record

CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

– Report on the Scientific Forum 2019

1. The PRESIDENT, recalling that the theme of the Scientific Forum 2019 had been “A Decade of Action on Cancer Control and the Way Forward”, invited the Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2019, Ms Catherine Nyongesa, to report on the Forum.
2. Ms NYONGESA (Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2019) read the report, which is annexed hereto.
3. The PRESIDENT thanked Ms Nyongesa for the report and commended her and the Secretariat on the success of the Scientific Forum 2019.

20. Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GOV/2019/35-GC(63)/14(Corrected); GC(63)/L.1)

4. The PRESIDENT said that item 20 had been included in the agenda pursuant to resolution GC(62)/RES/14 and that the Director General had accordingly submitted the report set out in document GOV/2019/35-GC(63)/14(Corrected), which had been considered by the Board. Document GC(63)/L.1 contained a draft resolution submitted by Egypt.
5. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt) said that ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons was a priority of his country’s foreign policy in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. For decades, Egypt had striven to achieve that goal through numerous initiatives and resolutions that it had submitted to the UN General Assembly and the Agency’s General Conference.
6. Even though those resolutions had all been adopted either by consensus or with a significant majority, none had been implemented, owing to a lack of political will. The resulting stalemate undermined the non-proliferation regime.
7. In 2019, Egypt had submitted to the General Conference the same draft resolution text on the application of safeguards in the Middle East as it submitted every year. The text provided a strong basis for establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. A vote against the resolution demonstrated a lack of respect for States’ obligations to support the non-proliferation regime and would compromise the work of the international community to prevent nuclear proliferation. Egypt therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted with a significant majority.
8. All Member States were called on to honour their commitments to promote international peace and security. To that end, States needed to take concrete, practical steps without delay to implement the text of the draft resolution, the content of which represented genuine action to build trust among States in the region. Egypt encouraged consultations between the Director General and Member States in the region in that regard.
9. Egypt expected the Secretariat to give due attention to ensuring the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime and the application of comprehensive safeguards to nuclear facilities in the Middle East, in particular those not subject to any verification or monitoring measures. All

Member States had a duty to tackle the current challenges in line with the provisions of the draft resolution submitted, with a view to overcoming the stalemate.

10. Egypt welcomed the organization of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in New York in November 2019 pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. He commended the Agency on its participation therein. All interested States were encouraged to take part in the conference, which presented an opportunity to break the deadlock and provided a suitable framework for States in the region to discuss their concerns openly and directly.

11. Mr NUSBAUM (Israel) said that, in the past, his country had joined the consensus on the General Conference resolution on the Middle East, reflecting a shared vision for regional stability and security. However, the language of the draft resolution currently under discussion implied that adherence to the NPT was a means of enhancing peace and security in the Middle East. Such a concept was inherently flawed as it did not take regional realities into account. While Israel had repeatedly expressed its commitment to the non-proliferation regime, four States in the region — the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya and Iraq — had failed to comply with their obligations under the NPT. Violations included the development of covert nuclear weapons programmes and the covert construction of a military nuclear reactor in Syria. Accordingly, while Israel shared the vision articulated by the draft resolution, the lack of a solid foundation for adherence to agreements in the region, coupled with an absence of mutual recognition and trust, led to the conclusion that the text lacked the required balance, given the regional circumstances.

12. Israel attached high importance to the non-proliferation regime and shared its goals. Nevertheless, the geopolitical situation in the Middle East clearly demonstrated that the NPT did not provide a remedy for the unique security challenges of the region, especially considering the repeated violations of the NPT by several States Parties. Accession to the NPT was not a goal in and of itself. Calls for universal accession to the NPT must also be judged against the views held by some in the region concerning the State of Israel, the existence of which was not recognized by several Arab States, and the position of Iran, which had openly and explicitly called for Israel's destruction.

13. Lessons learned from other regions had shown that a regional security framework could only stem from the shared political will of all regional parties to engage directly with each other and to take into consideration the security concerns of each and every State on the basis of consensus. A comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and full compliance by all States of the region with their non-proliferation obligations were prerequisites for the establishment of a zone free of all WMDs. The current regrettable situation in the Middle East and the multiple threats, conventional and non-conventional alike, justified Israel's approach.

14. He expressed the hope that the sponsors of the draft resolution under consideration would take Israel's views into account and work to find an agreed text likely to lead to the reinstatement of consensus. Until such time, his country was obliged to vote against paragraph 2 of the draft resolution and to abstain on the draft resolution as a whole. Israel accordingly requested that separate votes be taken on paragraph 2 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

15. Mr CHACÓN ESCAMILLO (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of NAM, welcomed the report set out in document GOV/2019/35-GC(63)/14(Corrected) and said that NAM was still committed to its principled position on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East. It strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region where a continuing massive imbalance in military capabilities, in particular owing to the possession of nuclear weapons, allowed one party to threaten its neighbours and others in the region. In its conviction that the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East would be a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament, NAM reiterated its

support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. NAM was also convinced that the effective and efficient application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East promoted greater confidence among States in the region. Achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East was the first practical step towards such confidence-building, and was necessary for establishing an NWFZ in that region.

16. NAM welcomed the fact that its members which were party to the NPT had concluded CSAs with the Agency as non-nuclear-weapon States. All States in the Middle East, except Israel, were party to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards. Of particular note was the accession of the State of Palestine to the NPT in February 2015 and its signing of a CSA in June 2019.

17. He expressed NAM's regret at Israel's continued insistence that the issue of Agency safeguards could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process. There was no automatic sequence rendering the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East dependent on a peace settlement there: in fact, the former would contribute to the latter.

18. NAM also regretted that no further progress had been made in fulfilling the Director General's mandate under resolution GC(62)/RES/12 regarding the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. NAM encouraged the active participation of all Member States in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East and requested that priority be given to that objective when promoting safeguards in the region. Noting that consultations would be continued in accordance with the aforementioned mandate, NAM welcomed efforts to encourage new ideas and approaches that might aid progress, and requested that Member States continue to be briefed regularly on the issue.

19. NAM States Parties to the NPT recalled the consensus decision contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on convening, in 2012, a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Those States reiterated their profound disappointment that the related 2010 action plan had not been implemented, contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and in violation of the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

20. NAM States Parties to the NPT regretted that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had not been able to reach agreement on its draft final document, which could have a negative impact on the NPT regime. In that connection, NAM requested the Secretariat to continue its efforts and consultations with all Member States on arrangements conducive towards the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East region.

21. Highlighting the importance of the adoption of UN General Assembly decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, NAM called upon all States in the region, without exception, to participate actively in the conference, negotiate in good faith and bring to a conclusion a legally binding treaty on the establishment of such a zone. NAM looked forward to the Agency's participation in the conference and requested the Secretariat to provide its expertise and the background documents for the conference, as mandated by decision 73/546.

22. He stressed that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and other decisions on the subject adopted within the context of the NPT Review Conferences remained valid until such time as their goals were achieved. Decision 73/546 could be implemented without prejudice to their validity and should not be construed as their replacement.

23. NAM was fully committed to supporting efforts to implement resolution GC(62)/RES/12 and expected all other Member States to do the same. It requested continued consultations between the Director General and Member States on arrangements for establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East.

24. Finally, NAM endorsed the draft resolution contained in document GC(63)/L.1.

25. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, recalled that all countries in the Middle East region, apart from Israel, were party to the NPT and had concluded CSAs. Efforts to universalize the NPT and comprehensive Agency safeguards therefore needed to be consolidated.

26. The Group regretted that no progress had been made on the implementation of the previous year's resolution GC(62)/RES/12, despite its adoption by a majority vote. The Agency must do more to implement that resolution and break the deadlock on the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

27. The adoption of UN General Assembly decision 73/546 in 2018 by a majority vote confirmed the strong support for a conference on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Recalling the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, he urged all States that had not voted in favour of the decision to review their positions and to participate in the conference, thus avoiding double standards in dealing with international instruments on non-proliferation and disarmament.

28. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs was coordinating with the relevant States to organize the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November 2019. The Group urged Member States not to form prejudgements and to support the process, which was open to all States in the region without restrictions or preconditions. The Group fully endorsed the nomination of Jordan to preside over the first session of the conference, which would provide an opportunity for all concerned parties to willingly reach a consensus on how to establish such a zone. Noting the relevance of the Agency's verification and inspection activities, the Group called on the Secretariat to contribute the necessary expertise and documents for the conference, in accordance with decision 73/546.

29. Mr ADJI (Indonesia) said that his country appreciated the efforts undertaken by States in the Middle East to achieve the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the region and welcomed the signing of a CSA between Palestine and the Agency in June 2019.

30. It was regrettable, however, that resolution GC(62)/RES/12 could not be fully implemented, with no further progress made in the Director General's mandate to ensure the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. In that connection, Indonesia called on all States in the region to adhere unconditionally to comprehensive safeguards.

31. Indonesia continued to attach great importance to achieving a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs. In that regard, his country underscored the importance of General Assembly decision 73/546 on the convening of the long-delayed conference on that issue, and welcomed the Agency's participation therein. The establishment of such a zone was an important step towards bolstering peace and security in the region and the world as a whole.

32. Mr CHACÓN ESCAMILLO (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the effective and efficient application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East promoted greater confidence among States in the region. Achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East was the first practical step towards building confidence among the States there, and was necessary in establishing an NWFZ.

33. At a number of international forums, Venezuela had stressed the urgent need for Israel to accede to the NPT, place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards and contribute to the establishment of

an NWFZ in the Middle East. In its conviction that the establishment of an NWFZ was a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament, Venezuela reiterated its support for the creation of such a zone pursuant to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

34. While welcoming the adoption in 2018 of General Assembly resolution 73/28 on the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, Venezuela regretted that consensus on the resolution had not been maintained. Also of importance was General Assembly decision 73/546 on the convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November 2019. It was crucial for all States in the region, without exception, to participate actively in that conference.

35. He emphasized that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and other decisions adopted at the NPT Review Conferences remained valid until such time as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs had been established.

36. Mr SANTANA NÚÑEZ (Cuba) said that most Member States shared the desire for a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which Cuba was proud to have ratified, was a demonstration of the political will of most of the international community to move towards complete nuclear disarmament.

37. It was regrettable, however, that an international conference on establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs had not yet been held, even though NPT States Parties had made a commitment to that end.

38. He reaffirmed his country's support for the establishment of such a zone, which the international community had called for in numerous General Assembly and General Conference resolutions and decisions. Its establishment would contribute significantly to nuclear disarmament and peace and stability in the Middle East. To achieve that goal, the only State in the region that was not party to the NPT needed to join the Treaty, renounce its possession of nuclear weapons and subject all its nuclear facilities to comprehensive Agency safeguards.

39. Mr ADJABI (Algeria) expressed deep concern regarding Israel's intransigent refusal to accede to the NPT and to submit its nuclear facilities to comprehensive Agency safeguards. Israel's stance was the major hurdle to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, which had a negative impact on regional peace and stability. Disappointed with the lack of progress on implementing the previous year's resolution GC(62)/RES/12, Algeria urged the Agency to intensify its efforts in that regard, with a view to overcoming the stalemate that hindered the establishment of such a zone.

40. General Assembly decision 73/546 of 2018 consolidated the strong international support for creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Commending the countries that had backed the decision, Algeria urged all parties concerned, especially the sponsors of the decision, to continue working earnestly to achieve a successful conference in November 2019 and put an end to the deadlock.

41. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, all NPT States Parties in the region had shown willing to take practical steps towards establishing an NWFZ there. However, Israel, fully backed by its allies, had frustrated progress with its ongoing defiance of the international community and refusal to accede to the NPT. For example, in 2003, Syria had submitted to the UN Security Council a draft resolution on establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, which had been vetoed by a permanent member of the Security Council.

42. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had confirmed that the 1995 resolution remained valid until its goals and objectives were achieved, and had endorsed the organization of a conference in 2012 on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs, to be attended by all States of the Middle East. Israel's repeated refusal to participate in the conference, however, had thwarted the organizers' efforts, and had negatively affected the outcomes of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Consequently, there had been extremely disappointing progress over the preceding 25 years. The USA had doggedly resisted any international resolution or initiative that would limit Israel's nuclear capabilities, thus keeping Israel beyond the sphere of international accountability. Furthermore, the USA had imposed crippling sanctions, unilaterally revoked agreements, launched disinformation campaigns and concocted lies and accusations to divert attention from the threat of Israeli nuclear capabilities.

43. The adoption of General Assembly decision 73/546 in 2018 sought to break the stalemate on the implementation of the 1995 resolution. In that connection, Syria stood ready to work with all States to achieve fruitful and effective outcomes at the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November 2019. Commending the support for the decision shown by certain sponsors of the 1995 resolution, Syria denounced the USA's persistent refusal to participate in the conference and its hindering of the implementation of the 1995 resolution.

44. The establishment of a Middle East NWFZ would promote regional and international peace and security, which remained at risk while Israel refused to accede to the NPT and related treaties on WMDs.

45. Noting the lack of progress in the application of safeguards in the Middle East over the preceding years, Syria urged the Secretariat to step up its efforts to implement the relevant General Conference resolutions.

46. Mr HUSSEN (Iraq) called on the Agency and the international community to take the necessary steps to implement the resolution and other documents emanating from the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and 2010 NPT Review Conference. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East would ensure the practical application of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the region on a fair and equal basis. In that connection, he underscored the responsibility of the international community to ensure the success of the forthcoming Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held later that year, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546.

47. Iraq welcomed Palestine's conclusion of an Agency safeguards agreement in connection with the NPT. That development would support the joint efforts of the Arab States to promote peace, safety and security in the Middle East region and in the world as a whole.

48. He expressed his country's appreciation for the continued efforts to fulfil the Director General's mandate under decision GC(44)/DEC/12 and resolution GC(62)/RES/12.

49. Exercising the right of reply, he fully rejected Israel's claim that the violation of the NPT and Agency safeguards by the previous political regime of Iraq demonstrated the inadequacy of those instruments to guarantee peace. Such reasoning undermined the commitments made by States to support the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and was simply an attempt by Israel to evade its obligation to adhere to the NPT. In that connection, the international community must shoulder its professional and moral responsibility to implement UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which called on Israel to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

50. Mr MOLEKANE (South Africa) noted that, following the conclusion by Palestine of a safeguards agreement and additional protocol, Israel was the only State in the region without a CSA as required

under Article III of the NPT. He commended the Secretariat for pursuing further consultations with the States of the Middle East to facilitate the early application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the region as relevant to the preparation of model agreements, as a necessary step towards the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

51. South Africa welcomed the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held by the United Nations in November 2019 and supported the Agency's participation therein.

52. His country, which had consistently reiterated its full support for the NPT, particularly the balance between its three pillars, called once again on Israel to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Such an action would facilitate the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs, which had been reaffirmed at the NPT Review Conferences in 2000 and 2010.

53. Mr GHARIB ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, since 1980, the UN General Assembly had adopted numerous resolutions on the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East without the need for a vote, which reflected the importance of achieving that noble goal. The establishment of an NWFZ was essential in such a volatile region, where the unbridled and reckless nuclear activities of the Israeli regime posed a threat to the region and beyond. A continued failure to do so would have an adverse impact on the integrity, credibility and relevance of the NPT.

54. Universal accession to the NPT and application of Agency safeguards would be instrumental in establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. He drew attention to the accession of Palestine to the NPT and its steps to conclude a CSA with the Agency, and expressed Iran's hope that the CSA would apply to all occupied territories of Palestine in due course.

55. It was a matter of deep regret that Israel, confident of the political and military support it received from certain countries, had the audacity to run an illegal clandestine military nuclear programme while failing to declare its intention to accede to the NPT, place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards or abandon its WMD programme.

56. Given the decades spent trying to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East, maintaining the current status quo was not an option. The 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference could no longer be ignored by certain Member States who protected the interests of a non-party to the NPT that posed a physical threat to peace and security in the region. The establishment of an NWFZ would be a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament and would promote greater confidence among States in the region.

57. In that regard, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and other decisions on the subject adopted within the context of the NPT Review Conferences remained valid until such time as their goals were achieved. General Assembly decision 73/546 could be implemented without prejudice to their validity and should not be construed as their replacement.

58. The only solution to the present situation was to exert sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to accede to the NPT, promptly and unconditionally, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all its clandestine nuclear activities and facilities under full-scope safeguards.

59. Ms ENEMER (Libya) stressed her country's full support for universal accession to the NPT and for the implementation of all resolutions relevant to creating a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

60. In response to Israel's comment about Libya, she emphasized that her country had voluntarily abandoned its nuclear weapons programme under the previous regime. In that connection, Libya called on Israel to comply with Agency safeguards and accede to the NPT.

61. Her country welcomed the forthcoming Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held in November 2019 in New York.

62. The PRESIDENT recalled that Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on paragraph 2 of the draft resolution set out in document GC(63)/L.1.

63. At the request of Egypt, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

65. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour²: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Brazil, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Honduras, India, Lesotho, Rwanda, Togo, United States of America.

66. There were 117 votes in favour and 1 against, with 10 abstentions. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was adopted.

67. Mr ANSARI (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had abstained because it believed that paragraph 2 of the draft resolution contained elements that were extraneous to the Agency.

68. The PRESIDENT noted that Israel had requested a vote on the whole of the draft resolution contained in document GC(63)/L.1.

69. At the request of Egypt, a roll-call vote was taken.

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

² The Plurinational State of Bolivia later advised the Secretariat that, had it been present, it would have voted in favour.

71. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour³: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Honduras, Israel, Lesotho, Rwanda, Togo, United States of America.

72. There were 117 votes in favour and none against, with 11 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

73. Mr KÜNTZLE (Germany), speaking also on behalf of France and the United Kingdom, said that all three countries had supported the resolution in the same spirit as at previous sessions. They viewed it exclusively in the context of the NPT and the Agency. The word “relevant” in paragraph 3 clearly related solely to the application of safeguards, in line with the title of the resolution. France, Germany and the United Kingdom continued to support efforts to promote a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs and their delivery systems.

74. Ms WOLCOTT (United States of America) said that her country continued to support many of the goals outlined in the resolution, including the long-term goal of a Middle East free of WMDs and their delivery systems, along with comprehensive and durable regional peace. The USA also strongly endorsed a number of key elements outlined in the resolution, including the importance of confidence- and security-building measures, the need for adherence by States of the region to existing non-proliferation obligations, and the necessity of pursuing those goals in the context of broader regional peace efforts.

75. The USA was fully committed to supporting the States of the region as they pursued practical steps and inclusive, consensus-based dialogue to advance the shared long-term goal of a safer and more secure Middle East free of WMDs and their delivery systems, and as they worked to address the real-world political and security barriers that continued to hamper progress in that regard, including the lack of trust among those States, non-compliance in the region and the non-recognition of Israel by some States.

76. Efforts to that end should be pursued by the States of the region in an inclusive, cooperative and consensus-based manner, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all. The USA therefore deeply

³ Eritrea later advised the Secretariat that, had it been present, it would have voted in favour.

regretted the UN General Assembly's adoption, with a divided vote, of an Arab Group-sponsored decision calling on the Secretary-General to convene a conference to negotiate a legally-binding treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of WMDs. The decision did not command consensus in the region and was based on terms that were known to be unacceptable to other regional parties. In the absence of participation by all regional States, her country would not attend the conference and would regard any outcome as illegitimate. Given the divergent views among Member States regarding that initiative, she urged the Agency to carefully consider its approach to the conference.

77. For many years, the General Conference resolution on safeguards in the Middle East had been adopted by consensus pursuant to a mutually agreed approach among regional States. Unfortunately, that approach had been abandoned in recent years in favour of the submission of a draft resolution that could not command regional consensus and which was pursued alongside a divisive and politically motivated agenda item aimed solely at isolating one State in the region. The USA deeply regretted that development — and similarly divisive efforts in other multilateral forums — and urged the sponsors of the resolution to re-engage with their regional neighbours to return to a consensus-based approach to such issues, so that they could be addressed in a more collaborative and productive manner.

78. Ms HULAN (Canada) said that her country continued to call on all States that had not yet done so to sign and promptly bring into force a CSA and additional protocol. Canada's support for the establishment of a verifiable NWFZ in the Middle East and its concerns regarding non-compliance issues in the region had been clear and consistent.

79. Speaking in explanation of vote, she noted that, in its present form, the resolution just adopted unduly and unhelpfully politicized a forum that had historically taken a more technical approach to such issues. Canada had therefore decided to abstain from the votes both on paragraph 2 and on the resolution as a whole.

21. Israeli nuclear capabilities

(GC(63)/1/Add.1; GC(63)/17 and Corr.1)

80. The PRESIDENT said that item 21 had been included in the agenda at the request of Arab States that were members of the Agency. It was covered by an explanatory memorandum in document GC(63)/1/Add.1 and by documents GC(63)/17 and Corr.1.

81. Mr CHACÓN ESCAMILLO (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that NAM strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region where a continuing massive imbalance in military capabilities, in particular owing to the possession of nuclear weapons, allowed one party to threaten its neighbours and others in the region.

82. NAM welcomed the fact that its members which were party to the NPT had concluded CSAs with the Agency as non-nuclear-weapon States. All States in the Middle East, except Israel, were party to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards.

83. In its conviction that the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East would be a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament, NAM reiterated its support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

84. It also considered that the selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East had undermined the viability of the Agency's safeguards regime and had resulted in the preservation of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, despite repeated calls on Israel to

place them under comprehensive Agency safeguards. NAM was gravely concerned about the dire consequences for international security of Israel's nuclear capabilities, which posed a serious threat to neighbouring and other States, and about the continuing provision to Israeli scientists of access to the nuclear facilities of one nuclear-weapon State.

85. NAM called on all Member States to cooperate in rectifying that unacceptable situation and in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East by implementing resolution GC(53)/RES/17 as a first step. NAM regretted Israel's continued insistence that the issue of Agency safeguards could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process. There was no automatic sequence rendering the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East dependent on a peace settlement there; in fact, the former would contribute to the latter.

86. NAM reiterated its call for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, devices and other resources, and of the extension of assistance in nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel.

87. Referring to past statements by Israel to the effect that it valued the non-proliferation regime, acknowledged its importance and had conducted a responsible policy of restraint in the nuclear domain, NAM noted with regret that Agency documents had attested to the contrary, including General Conference resolutions adopted prior to 1994 condemning Israel's military and nuclear collaboration with the racist regime of apartheid South Africa.

88. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that the Arab States had striven for more than four decades to find a solution to their concerns about nuclear material, programmes and facilities that were not under international safeguards and thus posed a threat to their security and stability. The Arab States had chosen to join the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime rather than a regional arms race that could be disastrous for international peace and security.

89. With a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation among the international community, the Arab States had ratified the NPT, believing that all other Parties were seriously committed to achieving universality of the Treaty and mutual security for all States without discrimination. They welcomed Palestine's recent signing of a CSA with the Agency, following its ratification of the NPT in early 2015. Such a development would further bolster efforts to strengthen regional and international peace and security.

90. As Israel was still the only State in the region that refused to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear programmes and facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, the Arab States had appealed to the NPT Review Conferences, the Agency, and the UN General Assembly and Security Council to take action to encourage Israel's accession to the NPT and to ensure compliance with the Agency's norms and regulations in furtherance of international peace and security.

91. The adoption by various international bodies of dozens of resolutions supporting the Arab States' initiative had regrettably proven to be merely rhetorical, owing to the lack of international will to ensure their implementation. The Agency's General Conference had adopted a number of resolutions since the 1980s calling on Israel to accede to the NPT, the most recent being resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities, adopted in 2009. The implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East was a matter of utmost priority, and its co-sponsors had a responsibility to ensure that it was achieved. Attempts by any party to delay its implementation must be rejected.

92. Israel had categorically refused to implement the aforementioned resolutions, deliberately debasing the NPT and describing it as ineffective in the Middle East. The country's refusal to accede to the NPT constituted a threat to regional and global peace and security, particularly in light of its

development of nuclear weapons, the existence of which had been acknowledged by numerous Israeli officials and discussed in many international reports.

93. The unprecedented protection provided to Israel by certain international powers, which enabled it to flout international law without fear of being called to account, had undermined and weakened the global non-proliferation regime. Indeed, while the international community inexplicably remained silent, Israel extracted concessions and received technical and military support that was denied to NPT States Parties.

94. It was critically important for Israel to accede to the NPT because of the significant security and safety risks stemming from the lack of Agency oversight over Israel's ageing nuclear facilities, particularly the nuclear reactor near Dimona, which had the potential to cause a nuclear accident with catastrophic repercussions for the entire Middle East region.

95. The Group considered that such treatment of an issue that adversely affected security and stability in the Middle East and the world was totally unacceptable. The Arab States were indignant that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had been scuppered in order to safeguard the interests of a non-party to the NPT. It was a core responsibility of the General Conference to request a State to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities and programmes under comprehensive safeguards; any attempt to stifle such requests undermined the credibility of the NPT and the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.

96. Faced with continuous attempts to thwart its efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, the Arab Group was continuing consultations on ways to facilitate the successful adoption of a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, and thanked those Member States that had supported the draft resolution at previous sessions. While the Group had refrained from submitting a draft resolution at the current session of the General Conference, that did not mean that no such resolution would be submitted in the future.

97. The Arab Group urged the international community, in particular the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, to shoulder their responsibilities and support efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

98. Ms AL-HADID (Jordan) said that her country attached great importance to the comprehensive safeguards regime as the cornerstone of international endeavours to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to confine the use of nuclear energy to peaceful applications.

99. Underscoring the scale of the threat posed by nuclear weapons and other WMDs to international peace and security, in particular to stability in the Middle East, Jordan stressed the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, thereby universalizing the Treaty and facilitating the establishment of an NWFZ. Such action would contribute to peace and security, and create an incentive for States to focus on economic and social development rather than on an arms race that would hinder development and exacerbate tensions.

101. The universalization of the NPT in the Middle East constituted a major challenge and an urgent priority for the international community. Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty and place its nuclear facilities and military programmes under international oversight fuelled distrust and threatened regional and international peace and security.

102. The international community had adopted dozens of resolutions in international forums calling for the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, in particular the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Yet no progress had been made towards implementation of that resolution because of Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT.

103. Jordan welcomed UN General Assembly decision 73/546 on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs and it looked forward to the first conference to be held in November 2019 under the presidency of Jordan. Her country commended the Agency on its planned participation in the conference and its preparation of documents, in accordance with the mandate set forth in decision 73/546.

104. Jordan deplored the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on a final document, thereby thwarting efforts to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East. Security in the region would remain under threat for as long as nuclear facilities and programmes remained outside the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. Jordan was hopeful that the 2020 NPT Review Conference would be successful and that a final document would be agreed upon.

105. Mr ADJI (Indonesia) said that his country believed that the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Furthermore, efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation should be made in parallel to nuclear disarmament efforts. The universality of the NPT was an important element in that regard.

106. Indonesia strongly supported the speedy establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, in accordance with resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council. The establishment of such a zone would enhance peace and stability in the region and contribute to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. Indonesia considered that permitting a country to develop nuclear weapons capabilities outside the NPT and to keep its nuclear material and facilities outside the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime was tantamount to betrayal of the commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, and endangered peace and stability in the region.

107. Mr JARALLAH (Kuwait) said that his country attached great importance to the NPT and the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities and facilities in the Middle East, and stressed that the Agency was the only authority mandated to verify the peaceful nature of nuclear programmes, in line with NPT obligations. The universalization of comprehensive safeguards and establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East would have a direct impact on the region's stability and would contribute to international peace and security.

108. The resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, which was adopted each year by the General Conference, affirmed the urgent need for all States in the Middle East to forthwith accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities. The Director General's reports on the subject also stated each year that all States in the region except for Israel were Parties to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards.

109. Discussions in the Agency's Policy-Making Organs focused on the importance of strengthening all aspects of the nuclear safety and security environment and of enhancing the Agency's ability to fulfil its verification mandate and to apply the safeguards regime effectively and efficiently. During those discussions, Kuwait was taken aback by the attitude of certain influential parties, who persistently turned a blind eye to the risks stemming from Israeli nuclear capabilities.

110. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the ratification of the NPT by all States in the region, as well as Palestine's recent accession thereto, and the implementation of CSAs by the States concerned, Israel still obstinately rejected all initiatives and refused to take any serious steps towards enabling the Agency to apply comprehensive safeguards throughout the Middle East, which would pave the way for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Israel's nuclear programme undermined the region's safety and security, exacerbated existing tensions and flagrantly violated many international resolutions adopted in various forums.

111. He underscored the importance of achieving tangible progress in the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Kuwait was also fully committed to the conclusions of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, especially those concerning the Middle East, and including the 2010 action plan.

112. Kuwait called upon the international community to shoulder its responsibility and to urge Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

113. His country welcomed the acting Director General's announcement that the Agency would be participating in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held in New York in November 2019. Kuwait called on all interested States to participate in and support the conference.

114. Kuwait also called for the maintenance of the item concerning Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the Agency's Policy-Making Organs.

115. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Israel's persistent clandestine efforts, beginning in the 1950s and continuing to date, to strengthen its nuclear military capabilities had been shielded from international oversight. Certain Western States had provided Israel with the Dimona reactor, which was producing nuclear weapons, materials and technology. Those actions had led to Israel's possession of a massive arsenal of nuclear warheads and the means of delivering them, including intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The same States also assisted Israel in international forums by diverting attention away from the issue of its nuclear capabilities.

116. The presence of Israel's sizeable nuclear capabilities had been confirmed multiple times, including in statements by Israeli officials and even a statement in December 2006 in which the country's Prime Minister had included Israel among the world's nuclear powers. All States in the Middle East had expressed their deep concern regarding Israel's nuclear capabilities which, taking into account that country's continued aggressive behaviour, posed a threat to the peace and security of the region.

117. UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981) had called on Israel to immediately submit its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards. General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 had reflected the international community's concern regarding the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the safety and stability of the Middle East and had delivered the clear message that Israel should accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Israel had persistently ignored the resolution, just as it had ignored all other relevant resolutions adopted by international organizations and forums. It was regrettable that several influential States, including nuclear-weapon States, applied flagrant double standards, advocating the universality of the NPT on the one hand, yet disregarding that principle when it came to Israeli nuclear capabilities, on the other.

118. Israel's failure to accede to the NPT, or any international agreement relating to disarmament or its nuclear capabilities, posed a serious threat to the non-proliferation regime. Its consistent rejection of all initiatives aimed at establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East threatened the peace and stability of the region and the world. The time had come for the international community to set aside its policy of condoning Israeli practices and to take a clear decision and serious practical steps to compel Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all its nuclear facilities, unconditionally and unreservedly, under Agency safeguards.

119. Mr ASSAF (Lebanon) said that the item had been included on the agenda to shed light on the threat to the Middle East posed by Israel's nuclear capabilities. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the principles of non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes. Nuclear weapons had never promoted peace and security in the Middle East; rather, they destabilized trust-building between Israel and the other States of the region.

120. A further aim of the agenda item was to compel Israel to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, in accordance with multiple international resolutions, in particular General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 of 2009 and UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981). All Arab States had acceded to the NPT and accepted the Agency's safeguards system.

121. Israeli nuclear capabilities remained the stumbling block to the achievement of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Therefore, Lebanon welcomed UN General Assembly decision 73/546 of 2018 on convening a conference on that subject. His country hoped that the conference would produce actionable steps leading to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

122. Mr NUSBAUM (Israel) expressed regret that the item had been included on the agenda of the General Conference once again at the request of the Arab Group. The issue was beyond the scope of the Agency's mandate, greatly politicized the Agency, harmed its professional integrity and diverted attention from the real problems facing it and the non-proliferation regime.

123. By rejecting unconstructive and political draft resolutions submitted under the agenda item in the past, Member States had reaffirmed their position that politically-motivated initiatives aimed at singling out any Member State had no place at the General Conference. A clear message had also been sent to the sponsors of the draft resolution that direct dialogue among all regional States was the only way to secure agreement on any security or arms control arrangements. Trust and confidence were essential building blocks of regional security; they would not be achieved by avoiding the challenges that lay ahead and opting instead to single out Israel for political reasons.

124. Israel strived to live in a safe, secure and peaceful region and believed that its neighbours did too. However, the path to regional safety and security could not be paved with contentious resolutions and active denunciations of Israel. His country's efforts to initiate a productive regional dialogue based on a broad range of security issues had been reciprocated with biased resolutions, political attacks, and the continuing refusal of several States in the region, including Iran, to even recognize the State of Israel.

125. His country called upon the Arab Group to honour the will of Member States, cease their obstructive behaviour, and refrain from requesting the inclusion of the item on the agenda of future General Conferences.

126. In reference to another anti-Israel initiative imported from New York, Israel's position was well known and had been elaborated upon in the relevant UN forums. His country regretted that the new initiative would undermine regional trust and divert attention from the real regional security challenges, including those unrelated to non-proliferation. Israel hoped that the Arab Group would one day become interested in creating a constructive work plan to promote confidence and security in the region instead of singling out Israel and playing into the hands of Iran.

127. Mr HUSSEN (Iraq) said that all States had the inalienable right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without interference by a particular group or the imposition of mandatory, international conditions prejudicial to the State's interests. Yet the application of the norms and principles of the non-proliferation regime was subject to double standards in the Middle East region. Although the NPT was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, there was a tendency to disregard the fact that Israel, alone in the region, refused to accede to the NPT. Furthermore, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference had been attributable wholly and exclusively to the defence of Israel.

128. Iraq urged the international community to shoulder its moral and professional responsibility to implement paragraph 5 of UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which stipulated that all Israeli nuclear facilities should be placed under the safeguards regime, and to ensure that Israel acceded to the

NPT. Those key steps would help to build the trust that Israel itself had called for, strengthen regional peace and security and pave the way for the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

129. Efforts had to continue to be made to convene a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, in accordance with the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Such a measure would potentially have a positive impact, in both political and security-related terms, on the sensitive Middle East region. The international community therefore had a professional responsibility to ensure the success of the conference on that topic scheduled to be held in November 2019 in New York, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546. Iraq supported Jordan's candidacy for the presidency of that conference and welcomed the Agency's confirmation of its participation.

130. Mr ANDERTON (United States of America), welcoming the Arab Group's decision not to submit a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, said that his country regretted that the item had once again been included on the agenda, as Israel had not violated any agreements with the Agency and was a substantial contributor to the Agency's technical work. No other Member State in comparable circumstances was subject to similar criticism.

131. Many of the statements delivered under the present agenda item were counterproductive to the shared goal of a Middle East free of WMDs and their delivery systems. Divisive statements aimed at singling out one State for criticism did nothing to advance the international community's shared goals in relation to regional security and arms control. On the contrary, they undermined the trust and confidence necessary for regional dialogue and detracted from the Agency's technical work.

132. The USA urged States in the region to abandon divisive and politically motivated approaches to the issue, and instead pursue practical steps and direct dialogue with their neighbours in a manner aimed at building regional trust and confidence and addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties. That was the only way to achieve meaningful progress towards the shared goal of a Middle East free of all WMDs and their delivery systems.

133. Mr MOHAMMAD POUR FERAMI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that certain States tended to disregard the fact that all States in the Middle East, except for Israel, were Parties to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards in fulfilment of their obligation under Article III.1 of the NPT, as non-nuclear-weapon States. Those same States also often ignored the fact that the acquisition of a clandestine nuclear capability by Israel posed a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States. Unfortunately, Israel continued to ignore, and even brazenly flout, all international regimes governing WMDs, thus posing the only obstacle to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

134. The Israeli regime had ignored legitimate international concerns by refusing to accede to the NPT and continuing to advance its unlawful nuclear capabilities with the unquestioning support of some countries and the covert involvement of others, in flagrant violation of all international norms and regulations. The credibility and reliability of the global non-proliferation regime were in danger. The regrettable failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference due to the obstructive position of a few countries in support of a non-party to the NPT, would have dire consequences for regional and international security. All States should prioritize the universalization of the safeguards regime in the Middle East. Moreover, a selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East undermined the viability of the safeguards regime. The continued and dangerous presence of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities should no longer be tolerated. As a first step, the transfer of all nuclear-related scientific and technological equipment, information, material or facilities must be prohibited.

135. Maintaining the status quo in the Middle East was no longer an option, and ignoring the facts was not in the best interests of the region or the international community. The situation could only be addressed by exerting sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to accede promptly and unconditionally to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and to place all of its nuclear activities and installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

136. Mr SANTANA NUÑEZ (Cuba) said that his country attached great importance to the agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities, as the issue had serious implications for regional and international peace and security.

137. Cuba reaffirmed its support for the early establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, which would make an essential contribution to the peace and security of all peoples in the region.

138. Israel remained the only country in the Middle East not to have acceded to the NPT, despite the international community's repeated calls to do so. Such inaction posed a serious obstacle to creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Establishing such a zone would represent a considerable step towards nuclear disarmament and would contribute to the peace process in the region. It was also essential to comply with all General Conference resolutions on that subject.

139. Transforming the Middle East into a zone of peace and security for all required genuine political will, the elimination of double standards, the rejection of the indulgent attitude towards Israel shown by a number of States and unanimous insistence on the destruction of Israel's nuclear arsenal, under international supervision.

140. Mr YOUSSEF (Egypt), reiterating his country's support for the goals of non-proliferation and the universalization of the NPT as the legal basis of the Agency's verification mandate, said that, as the only non-party to the NPT in the region, Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty and place all its nuclear activities under comprehensive Agency safeguards undermined efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

141. As no progress had been made towards the universalization of comprehensive safeguards, in particular in the Middle East, Egypt once again underscored the need for genuine efforts to achieve that objective, as failure to change the status quo would have ramifications for the credibility of the non-proliferation regime.

142. For unjustifiable and subjective reasons, no progress had been made towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, despite the efforts of the Arab States. Egypt requested the Secretariat to prioritize the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime as an important confidence-building measure that would support international peace and security within the framework of efforts to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East.

143. With regard to the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction to be held in November 2019, pursuant to General Assembly decision 73/546 Egypt urged Israel to reconsider its refusal to participate and to instead view it as an opportunity to engage in the dialogue it had claimed it wanted, and to address its concerns regarding the items on the Conference's agenda.

144. As the 2020 NPT Review Conference approached, it became increasingly important to step up practical efforts to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East. States needed to work together to achieve the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime and ensure that all nuclear activities in the Middle East were subject to Agency safeguards.

145. Ms HÄMÄLÄINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the EU, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and San Marino aligned themselves with her statement.

146. While welcoming the Arab States' decision not to table a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities at the current session of the General Conference, the EU was, nonetheless, disappointed that the issue had again been included in the Conference's agenda, as it was a divisive political issue that should not affect the work of a technical organization such as the Agency. The EU was convinced that a consensus approach, as set out in the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, was the only way to make progress towards the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

19. Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (GOV/2019/33-GC(63)/20; GC(63)/L.6 and Add.1 to 3)

147. Ms HULAN (Canada) requested that, in the interest of time, Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference be waived so that the draft resolution set out in document GC(63)/L.6 could be considered immediately.

148. The PRESIDENT said that she took it that the Conference agreed to waive Rule 63 of its Rules of Procedure.

149. It was so agreed.

150. Ms HULAN (Canada), introducing the draft resolution set out in document GC(63)/L.6 and Add.1 to 3, said that, in accordance with long-standing practice, it had been drawn up in consultation with China and the Russian Federation and was being presented on behalf of 66 Member States.

151. Since 2018, the DPRK had taken the first steps towards addressing the international community's concerns about its illegitimate nuclear activities by suspending nuclear tests and announcing the destruction of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site. It had also engaged with the international community, notably through summits with the Republic of Korea, the USA, China and the Russian Federation. While such developments were positive, the report contained in document GOV/2019/33-GC(63)/20 indicated that the DPRK's nuclear activities remained a cause for grave concern.

152. The draft resolution, which built upon resolution GC(62)/RES/11, welcomed recent summits and the commitments of relevant parties, including that of the DPRK to ensure the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as expressed in the Panmunjeom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula, the joint statement by the DPRK and the USA of June 2018 and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration of September 2018. It stressed the importance of peaceful and diplomatic solutions in support of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the need for the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and immediately cease all related activities. It reaffirmed agreements reached at the Six-Party Talks, supported diplomatic engagement — including dialogue between the USA and the DPRK and between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK — and encouraged all parties to fully implement their commitments. It also condemned the six nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK in flagrant violation of various UN Security Council resolutions, noted the country's statement concerning a moratorium on nuclear tests, called on the DPRK to refrain from conducting any further tests and

stressed the importance of full implementation by the DPRK of its obligations pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions.

153. In response to the acting Director General's report set out in document GOV/2019/22-GC(63)/20, the draft resolution reiterated support for the Agency's efforts to monitor the DPRK's nuclear activities and to enhance its readiness to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme. Consistent with the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, it reaffirmed that the DPRK could not have the status of a nuclear-weapon State in accordance with the NPT and called upon the DPRK to come into full compliance with the NPT. Lastly, it deplored the DPRK's cessation of all cooperation with the Agency and called on the country to cooperate promptly with the Agency in the full and effective implementation of comprehensive Agency safeguards.

154. Given the broad support it had garnered, she hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. She expressed appreciation to those who had worked on drafting the text. Their ability to reach consensus year after year, despite their diverging views, demonstrated the international community's unwavering determination to see an end to the DPRK's illicit nuclear programme.

155. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(63)/L.6.

156. It was so decided.

157. Mr SHIN Chae-hyun (Republic of Korea), welcoming the adoption of the resolution by consensus on the anniversary of the Pyongyang Joint Declaration of September 2018, said that the unanimous position of the General Conference sent a strong and unified message that the Agency and the international community were committed to achieving the denuclearization of the DPRK and ensuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

158. The newly adopted resolution highlighted the important developments attained through diplomatic efforts at the summit level and stressed the importance of creating favourable conditions in order to achieve a democratic and peaceful solution. It was imperative that the collective wisdom and will of the international community were put to use to build on the achievements made thus far.

159. The Republic of Korea hoped that negotiations would soon resume between the USA and the DPRK and that they would translate the DPRK's denuclearization commitments into tangible measures. In that regard, he expressed his country's support for the Agency's intensified efforts to enhance its readiness to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK nuclear programme when the time came.

160. Much work remained to be done, however, and the next steps would require patience, perseverance and determination. The Republic of Korea would make every effort to work closely with all parties concerned to achieve their objectives. He called for the unified support of the international community to that end, and expressed appreciation to those who had taken part in drafting the resolution, in particular the delegations of Canada, China and the Russian Federation.

161. Mr ANDERTON (United States of America) welcomed the adoption of the resolution and commended the delegation of Canada for enabling consensus to be reached. The resolution echoed the international community's continued concern regarding the DPRK's nuclear programme, reflected the current status of the DPRK's nuclear activities and strongly supported the Secretariat's efforts to enhance its readiness to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme.

162. While stressing the importance of creating favourable conditions for a diplomatic and peaceful solution in support of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, he emphasized that the DPRK must comply fully with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and take concrete

steps to fulfil its international commitments, including by abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes.

163. It was important that all UN member States immediately and comprehensively fulfil their obligations pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions. His country remained ready to resume negotiations with DPRK in order to build on the progress made thus far.

164. Mr USTINOV (Russian Federation) expressed appreciation to Canada for its respectful and professional leadership of the discussions of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

165. The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula required patience, mutual respect and a readiness from the main players to work together; that had been the clear aim of all of those involved in drafting the resolution.

166. Mr HE Zhi (China), welcoming the adoption of the resolution, expressed appreciation to the delegation of Canada for coordinating the drafting process and commended the positive and cooperative spirit of all parties involved.

26. Report on contributions pledged to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2020

(GC(63)/19)

167. The PRESIDENT said that the details of the TCF contributions for 2020 pledged by governments by the close of the 63rd regular session of the General Conference would be issued in a revised version of document GC(63)/19⁴. By that time, Member States had pledged a total of €29 995 934, or 34.1% of the target for 2020. The 94 Member States that had pledged represented over 55% of Member States, setting a record compared with previous sessions. That record, and the fact that 10 Member States that had not pledged in 2018 had pledged in 2019, reflected the continued commitment of Member States to the Agency's TC activities.

168. The percentage of the TCF target pledged by the end of the 63rd regular session was 7.1% higher than the previous year and set another record compared with previous sessions. She urged all delegations that had not yet done so to make their 2020 pledges and pay their contributions in full at the earliest opportunity, to enable the Secretariat to submit to the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee in November 2019 a draft TC programme and budget for 2020 based on the level of pledges received and then to implement the approved programme without hindrance or uncertainty.

— Closing of the session

169. The PRESIDENT said that the current session of the General Conference had been well attended by high-level representatives of Member States, including one parliamentary speaker, one Vice-President, one Vice-Prime Minister, one First Lady and 58 ministers. During the general debate, 139 speakers had taken the floor.

⁴ Subsequently issued as document GC(63)/19/Rev.1

170. Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia) congratulated the President on her outstanding leadership of the 63rd regular session and commended the skill with which she and her officers had guided the negotiations. The unprecedented efficiency with which the General Conference had finalized its work was a positive development that reflected the uniqueness of the Vienna spirit and the continued commitment of Member States to multilateralism as a tool for reaching consensus on international matters. She thanked all delegations and members of the Secretariat that had contributed to the organization and conduct of the session.

171. Ms DRURY (Australia), speaking on behalf of the South East Asia and the Pacific Group, thanked the President for effectively guiding the 63rd regular session of the General Conference. She commended the Chair of the Committee of the Whole and her Vice-Chairs for their collaborative and constructive guidance of the Committee's work, and expressed appreciation for the support provided by the acting Director General and his staff during the session. Lastly, she thanked fellow delegations for their cooperation, patience and flexibility in achieving strong, consensus-based outcomes.

172. Ms PEÑA ARAQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of NAM, congratulated the President and her officers on their skilful stewardship of the session.

173. Ms HÄMÄLÄINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, thanked the President, the members of the General Committee and the Secretariat for their excellent work during the session.

174. The PRESIDENT, thanking the delegations for their kind words, expressed her appreciation to the Chair of the Committee of the Whole for her professionalism and diplomacy and thanked the delegations for their cooperation during the session.

175. She paid tribute to Ms Bavelile Hlongwa, Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy for South Africa, and to Mr Yukiya Amano, in whose memory the Member States should work together to fulfil their shared responsibility of enabling the Agency to achieve the goal of 'Atoms for Peace and Development'.

176. The Agency was an integral part of the rules-based multilateral system that guaranteed global peace, security and development. It was therefore commendable that, as stakeholders and decision-makers, the delegations had engaged in constructive deliberations in good faith, adhering to the letter and spirit of the Agency's Statute. She commended the delegations that had taken the lead on the various resolutions, which had achieved consensus for the most part, and noted that the General Conference had heard a diverse range of legitimate views.

177. She commended the speed with which the Committee of the Whole had finalized its work and thanked the delegations for respecting the time limit for statements in the general debate. The spirit of Vienna had also prevailed during the election by consensus of the incoming members of the Board of Governors.

178. The theme of the 2019 Scientific Forum, namely the role of nuclear technology in combating cancer, was a further testament to the relevance of the Agency's work to people's lives. In addition, she thanked the staff of the Secretariat for their professional work in favour of multilingualism and inclusion.

179. That date marked the anniversaries of two destructive earthquakes that had occurred in Mexico, claiming countless lives and causing severe damage. She thanked the international community for standing in solidarity with Mexico, helping to save lives and rebuild its cities, and the Agency for putting nuclear science at the service of healing and recovery.

180. She thanked Member States for granting her the privilege and responsibility of guiding the 63rd session of the General Conference. She expressed her appreciation to the acting Director General and

the Agency's staff for their valuable support during the session. She also thanked the Austrian authorities and the city of Vienna for their hospitality.

181. Finally, in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, she invited the Conference to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

182. The PRESIDENT declared the 63rd regular session of the General Conference closed.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

IAEA Scientific Forum 2019

A Decade of Action on Cancer Control and the Way Forward

Report to the 63rd IAEA General Conference

**Ms Catherine Nyongesa
(Chief Oncologist and Head of Department, Kenyatta National Hospital)**

Madam President, Acting Director General, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to present to the General Conference the report on the IAEA Scientific Forum 2019, the theme of which was *A Decade of Action on Cancer Control and the Way Forward*.

The annual IAEA Scientific Forum is organized parallel to the General Conference and seeks to showcase and advance the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology to contemporary challenges.

This year, the Late Director General Yukiya Amano gave priority to cancer, to highlight the essential role of nuclear techniques in tackling one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide and take stock of how the IAEA has supported its Member States in their cancer care efforts during the last ten years.

The Forum held during the past two days covered a wide range of topics that proved to be of great interest and relevance, as could be seen from the extensive participation of Member State representatives. Participants of the Forum expressed appreciation for the IAEA's assistance provided over the last 10 years and acknowledged the Agency's commitment to respond to the evolving needs in establishing or enhancing their cancer care services.

The Forum was structured into four thematic sessions and was opened by IAEA Acting Director General Cornel Feruță, who spoke about how radiation medicine plays an essential role in the diagnosis, treatment and management of cancer, and how, over the last ten years, helping low- and middle-income countries to improve access to radiotherapy and nuclear medicine became a top priority of the IAEA.

The keynote speaker, Professor Dr Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn of Thailand, emphasized her country's commitment to providing quality cancer care to its people. "We will continue to improve the life of cancer patients with highly skilled personnel and improved treatment techniques" she said.

Next, Her Excellency Ms Sika Kabore, First Lady of Burkina Faso stressed the importance of international partners and donors in her country's cancer control efforts highlighting how, with the support of the IAEA, construction of a radiotherapy centre commenced in April. "Burkina Faso is steadfastly committed to tackle cancer care," she said.

Her Excellency Ms Lalla Malika Mahamadou, First Lady of Niger highlighted the key goal of the government to increase access to treatment, "early diagnosis is key to success," she reiterated. The IAEA worked closely with Niger to develop a nuclear regulatory framework, secure donation of equipment and enhance human resource development.

Her Excellency Ms Elizabeth Zulema Tomás Gonzales, Minister of Health of Peru, spoke of the country's cooperation with the IAEA and other partners to provide cancer patients with access to care using the latest technology: "we must offer health services that are high quality, safe and have a human face."

Russia's Deputy Minister of Health, Mr Sergey Kraevoy, spoke of the country's health care priorities emphasizing the advances in cancer care services and the close collaboration with the IAEA in supporting Member States in this field.

The Acting Director of the National Cancer Institute, Mr Douglas Lowy, emphasized the critical role the IAEA can play in overcoming the health disparity between high- and lower-income countries and how radiotherapy is the key component in the treatment and cure of cervical cancer.

Next the Director General of the World Health Organization, Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, delivered a video message commending the long and successful cooperation of the WHO and the IAEA on cancer. He spoke on the two global initiatives undertaken by the WHO and the IAEA as well as other partners, namely, the elimination of cervical cancer, and second, acting against childhood cancer.

The opening session closed with Mr Bandar Hajjar, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), who spoke on the issue of women's cancers. He announced a plan to mobilize an initial US\$10 million in grants to countries that are common members of the both the IAEA and IsDB.

The first session entitled "Ten Years of Cancer Control – The Experience of Member States" showcased the experience of Member States in establishing infrastructure for nuclear and radiation medicine as part of their cancer care efforts, from the development of legislation and a regulatory framework for nuclear safety and security to the acquisition of technology and equipment.

The second session entitled "The IAEA Response to the Evolving Needs of Member States" focused on changing needs of countries, including in areas related to education, training and quality management, among others.

The third session entitled "Overview of Technology Advances in Nuclear and Radiation Medicine" provided an overview of existing and upcoming uses of radiation in medicine. Presenters detailed the latest advances in imaging, radiotherapy and radiopharmaceuticals.

The fourth session entitled "Supporting Cancer Control Programmes Through Partnerships" explored avenues to help IAEA Member States in their cancer control efforts through strategic partnerships with global institutions. During the session, several Member States and private companies announced support for the new Partnership Initiative on Women's Cancers.

During the closing session, Deputy Directors General, Ms Najat Mokhtar, Head of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, Mr Juan Carlos Lentijo, Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, and Mr Dazhu Yang Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation outlined the preparedness of the IAEA in collaboration with partners to respond to the evolving needs of Member States in the field of cancer care and answered questions from the audience. Joining them, Acting Director General, Mr Cornel Feruță, took stock of the discussions of the two-day Forum highlighting the long way the Agency and its Member States have come together in 10 years, in the effort to provide access to quality cancer care, reminding the audience how this is not the end of the journey but only the beginning.