

General Conference

GC(64)/OR.2

Issued: August 2021

General Distribution

Original: English

Sixty-fourth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Second Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Monday, 21 September 2020, at 3 p.m.¹

President: Mr FARHANE (Morocco)

Later: Ms HULAN (Canada)

Later: Mr ALASHI (Libya)

Contents

Item of the agenda ²	Paragraphs
7	General debate and Annual Report for 2019
	1–141
	Statements by the delegates of:
	Armenia
	1–4
	Philippines
	5–9
	Paraguay
	10–15
	Uzbekistan
	16–20
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	21–27
	Switzerland
	28–32
	India
	33–37
	Namibia
	38–42

¹ In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference decided that delegations so wishing could attend in a virtual manner using the Interprefy IT platform or make their statements by means of a pre-recorded video.

² GC(64)/19.

Contents (continued)

	Paragraphs
San Marino	43–46
Iraq	47–49
Estonia	50–55
Honduras	56–59
Nigeria	60–64
Burkina Faso	65–68
Egypt	69–74
Netherlands	75–78
Slovenia	79–82
Portugal	83–85
Tunisia	86
Holy See	87–91
Mexico	92
Singapore	93–96
Spain	97–103
Belarus	104–106
Argentina	107–112
Norway	113–116
Latvia	117–121
Poland	122–125
Jamaica	126–131
Bangladesh	132–136
Azerbaijan (right of reply)	137–139
Armenia (right of reply)	140–141

Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GW(e)	gigawatt (electrical)
ICONS	International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LDC	least developed country

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

MW(e)	megawatt electrical
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
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
R&D	research and development
SARS-CoV-2	severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMRs	small and medium sized or modular reactors
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2019 (continued) (GC(64)/3)

1. Mr PAPIKYAN (Armenia) expressed his Government's sincere condolences to and solidarity with all those affected by COVID-19, which had endangered not only global health, but also economic development and ways of life worldwide. Armenia noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the Secretariat to support key areas of the Agency's work in challenging circumstances, in particular in helping Member States to ensure the continuous and safe operation of NPPs. Welcoming the technical assistance that it and more than 120 countries had received for capacity building — along with detection kits — in order to address the pandemic and its consequences, Armenia thanked all donor countries for their contributions.

2. The experience gained from the application of nuclear technologies in controlling diseases should be put to further use. Armenia, therefore, hoped that, once the ZODIAC project had been finalized and approved by Member States, the Agency would be able to contribute its expertise and knowledge to international efforts to prevent zoonotic disease outbreaks and pandemics in the future.

3. In addition to the challenge of COVID-19, Armenia was facing an acute and unprecedented challenge to its security and that of the entire region: the very real threat made by an official speaking for a neighbouring State of a missile strike against the Metsamor NPP, with the declared objective of inflicting catastrophic damage on Armenia and its people. For the first time, a real threat to the safety of an NPP had come not from a terrorist organization but from the official spokesman of a State claiming to be a responsible member of the international community and a subject of international relations. The international legal framework and instruments had not been designed to deal with such threats; likewise the international community lacked functioning deterrent mechanisms to prevent States from threatening the security of nuclear facilities and to ensure an effective and timely response to such threats. For an official spokesman of the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan to threaten a strike against the Metsamor NPP during armed hostilities on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan was tantamount to a crime against humanity calling for an appropriate reaction by the international community. Armenia would continue to make every effort to prevent such threats in the future.

4. He concluded by emphasizing that, during its 29 years of independence, Armenia had consistently supported nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Moreover, his Government cooperated closely with the Agency on a variety of issues linked to nuclear safety and the physical protection of nuclear facilities.

Ms HULAN (Canada) took the Chair.

5. Mr DE LA PEÑA (Philippines), expressing his country's solidarity with all States affected by COVID-19, said that, as the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had been repeatedly harnessed to meet the pressing and complex challenges, it was not surprising that nuclear technology had stepped up in the case of COVID-19. He expressed his country's appreciation to the Agency and to all donor States for the assistance provided, and in particular for the forward-looking ZODIAC initiative.

6. In recognition of the fact that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic would require a reliable and sustainable electricity supply, in July 2020 President Rodrigo Duterte had signed an executive order authorizing a study with a view to adopting a national stance on nuclear power. The Philippines appreciated the Agency's comprehensive support in that important undertaking.

7. Thanks to its fruitful cooperation with the Agency over the previous year, the Philippines had used stable isotope techniques to study ways of ensuring the safety of food products, the results of which had been submitted to national agencies for review and potential inclusion in policies on food and quality standards. Such techniques continued to be used to characterize groundwater resources for providing clean drinking water.

8. By the end of 2020, the Philippines planned to complete the upgrade of its irradiation facilities, which served to support national efforts in the areas of disaster relief, agriculture, food safety and radiation grafting for water treatment and plastic recycling; in that connection, the Philippines supported the NuTEC Plastic initiative to address plastic pollution. In addition, the country's leading universities had begun offering nuclear subjects in existing undergraduate and graduate programmes. Moreover, the Philippines continued to support the Agency's efforts to encourage more women to work in the nuclear field.

9. He concluded by saying that the Philippines underscored the inalienable right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as enshrined in article IV of the NPT — which was celebrating its 50th anniversary.

10. Mr RIVAS PALACIOS (Paraguay) expressed his country's thanks for the Agency's efficient, effective and expeditious response to the biggest global health pandemic in recent history, and for the support it had received in strengthening its own COVID-19 diagnostic capabilities. Having emerged from a dengue virus epidemic several months previously, and owing to the country's biodiversity and its connection with livestock production, Paraguay was especially prone to zoonotic diseases. His country, therefore, fully supported the capacity building ZODIAC initiative.

11. Noting the Agency's work in strengthening safeguards and their implementation, he emphasized the consistency of the Agency's verification and monitoring activities under the safeguards agreements. Paraguay was convinced that multilateralism and cooperation had never been more crucial; the issue of nuclear security could not be tackled by means of individual national policies alone.

12. Working towards a world free of nuclear weapons was crucial and could be guaranteed only by complete, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Paraguay had accordingly presented its updated national report, together with a national implementation action plan, to the UN Security Council 1540 Committee in September 2019.

13. Paraguay backed all work on the denuclearization process of the Korean Peninsula on the basis of Security Council resolutions. Highlighting the importance of the JCPOA, his country urged Iran to comply fully with its commitments.

14. Paraguay pledged its full support for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

15. Within the Agency's TC programme, his country implemented national projects and participated in others with the goal of promoting nuclear techniques and their peaceful application. Lastly, Paraguay reiterated its commitment to the SDGs and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

16. Mr SULTANOV (Uzbekistan) thanked the Agency for continuing to offer States comprehensive and unwavering support in the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear science and technology for achieving sustainable development. In 2020, the whole world had been facing difficult challenges and all spheres of life had been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, nuclear science and technology were making a demonstrable contribution to the fight against the virus.

17. There had been further successful implementation of four national projects in Uzbekistan under Agency auspices: establishing the country's nuclear power infrastructure, modernizing its nuclear medicine facilities, improving research laboratories in the two leading universities, and enhancing the

operational safety of the country's WWR-SM research reactor. The Agency's TC programme was an effective tool for international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

18. The Government's decision to build Uzbekistan's first NPP had signalled a new phase in the fulfilment of the country's energy potential. In preparation, the Government was working actively to establish the necessary infrastructure. It was about to adopt a strategy on spent fuel management, radioactive waste and the decommissioning of nuclear installations, determining the procedures for the licensing of activities in the nuclear power field and for the regulatory approval of individual activities relating to nuclear power applications.

19. The draft decisions for Uzbekistan's accession to four international conventions had been prepared, and were expected to be adopted by the end of 2020 — the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

20. As a firm proponent of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Uzbekistan fully met its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement with the Agency. Thanking the Agency for its support, he affirmed Uzbekistan's commitment to complying with all its nuclear safety requirements and recommendations.

21. Mr ZAHAWI (United Kingdom), commending the Agency on its critical work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, said that his country had contributed £500 000 towards the Agency's provision of testing equipment to Member States requiring assistance.

22. The Agency played a key role in ensuring implementation of the NPT, a cornerstone of international peace and security. The UK had left the EU but remained committed to robust nuclear safeguards, as evidenced by its safeguards agreement with the Agency. In the interest of strengthening the global safeguards regime and its adaptability to new challenges, all States should ratify the additional protocol.

23. As a strong supporter of the JCPOA, given the Plan's importance to non-proliferation and security, the UK was working hard for its preservation. Calling on Iran to return to compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, he expressed his Government's gratitude to the Director General for his dedication in monitoring the situation.

24. The UK attached great importance to the Agency's role in supporting Member States to meet the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. In that connection, the commitments made at ICONS 2020 — which he had attended — and in the Ministerial Declaration could be realized only through concerted efforts.

25. Championing access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, the UK was proud to be pledging €3.9 million to the TCF for 2021. The Agency should target its assistance under the TC programme at the LDCs, while ensuring coordination with other UN organizations, focusing on its comparative advantage and attracting non-traditional donors.

26. Recalling that the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP26) would be held in Glasgow in 2021, he said that the climate must be at the heart of the economic recovery from COVID-19. With that in mind, the UK had legislated for a target of net zero by 2050; nuclear power would be instrumental in the achievement of that target. The UK had committed £100 million to the development of SMRs and the related technologies, giving rise to thousands of green jobs. His Government therefore commended the Director General on his leadership in the area of climate change and pledged funding for the Agency's research into the scourge of marine plastics.

27. Lastly, turning to gender equality, he commended the Director General on his commitment to improve gender diversity in the nuclear field. The UK was pleased to support the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

28. Mr REVAZ (Switzerland) thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their considerable efforts in maintaining the Agency's operational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

29. ICONS 2020 had reaffirmed the central role of the Agency in developing guidance documents on nuclear security, providing advisory services, strengthening capacity building and coordinating international cooperation. Switzerland looked forward to the development of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2022–2025, a process in which it would take an active part.

30. In 2021, three major meetings were scheduled in connection with the global nuclear safety regime, to which the Agency had made a long-standing contribution. Switzerland was committed to active participation in the Eighth CNS Review Meeting, postponed until March 2021, and would contribute to a successful outcome. With regard to the forthcoming Review Meeting, he noted that for his country the Joint Convention was an essential instrument for global nuclear security; in that context, the aim should be to conduct an efficient and transparent review of national reports and to exchange best practices at the international level. As for the first Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the CPPNM, his country believed that the regular holding of such conferences would strengthen the international nuclear security regime.

31. Switzerland hoped that, in view of the current circumstances, the Commission on Safety Standards would play a leading role in evaluating the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. His country looked forward to the results of that detailed analysis.

32. Switzerland was in favour of the Agency's verification and monitoring activities in Iran under the JCPOA, whose preservation was essential for regional and international security and non-proliferation. Recent developments, including the USA's withdrawal and its reimposition of sanctions and the steps subsequently taken by Iran, had regrettably jeopardized the Plan's preservation. Switzerland called on Iran to return to full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, noting that existing concerns should be resolved through diplomatic efforts rooted in consensus and ongoing cooperation between Iran and the Agency. In that regard, he welcomed Iran's recent decision to grant access to the Agency to two sites under its safeguards agreement.

33. Mr VYAS (India) said that his Government remained committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear research and applications. As stated by the Prime Minister during a ceremony to celebrate the assembly of ITER, nuclear energy was a testimony to the relentless pursuit of human knowledge and to the enduring quest to use science for general well-being.

34. In view of the unprecedented challenge the world was facing, India had adopted several bilateral and multilateral initiatives to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Atomic Energy had participated actively in national and international efforts to counter, track and study the virus causing COVID-19 and develop a strategy in response to the pandemic.

35. India had reaffirmed its commitment to the Agency through the placement of three facilities under safeguards since the previous General Conference, namely Units 7 and 8 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station, in December 2019, and the pressurized heavy water reactor at the fuel fabrication facility in Kota, in August 2020. In total, India had 29 facilities under Agency safeguards.

36. Highlighting several of India's achievements in peaceful nuclear applications, he said that Unit 3 of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station had achieved criticality on 22 July 2020. In that connection, a further 15 reactors would be developed on the basis of the 700 MW(e) pressurized heavy water reactor, which had been built in India. Moreover, in July 2020 India had signed a landmark cooperation

agreement with Euratom on R&D on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Furthermore, his Government had announced plans to establish a research reactor for the production of medical isotopes as part of a public–private partnership. India continued to work with the Agency in areas such as cancer care, capacity building and research.

37. India noted with appreciation that the Agency had continued its effective work in difficult circumstances, during which his country had hosted visits by four Agency teams. It looked forward to continued collaboration with the Agency in ensuring the growth of nuclear science and technology and enhancing the quality of life worldwide.

38. Mr SHANGULA (Namibia), noting that the sixty-fourth regular session was taking place in extraordinary circumstances, said that the COVID-19 pandemic would continue to have far-reaching and long-lasting socioeconomic effects worldwide; a reminder that international solidarity was essential. Namibia was grateful to the Agency and other Member States for providing testing equipment based on nuclear-derived techniques to detect the COVID-19 virus.

39. As the TC programme was still the key to achieving development priorities, Member States had shared responsibilities and international obligations to provide assured and predictable resources to the TCF in order to ensure the programme’s sustainability.

40. Noting with satisfaction the focus of the 2020 Scientific Forum on nuclear power and the clean energy transition, he said that, in relation to the development goals pursued by many Member States, including Namibia, nuclear power and the clean energy transition reduced dependence on fossil fuels and helped with the attainment of climate change goals. Nonetheless, extending the benefits of nuclear technology remained challenging. Accordingly, developing States should be receiving additional assistance in introducing nuclear to their energy mix under the Milestones Approach.

41. Namibia was one of the world’s largest producers of uranium and, in view of its commitment to nuclear security, radiation safety and non-proliferation, it had acceded to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and to the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

42. Lastly, Namibia trusted that the Director General’s ZODIAC initiative would provide the necessary impetus and expertise in the diagnosis and detection of zoonotic disease pathogens at the animal–human interface.

43. Mr BECCARI (San Marino) said that his country was grateful for the Agency’s generous support during the COVID-19 pandemic, having suffered one of the highest infection rates per capita worldwide. San Marino was proud to be part of an organization that took immediate action when necessary. In that regard, he commended the Director General and the Secretariat on their efficiency.

44. San Marino highly valued the activities conducted at the Seibersdorf laboratories, including those under the ZODIAC project. Member States must cooperate to address widespread outbreaks of diseases and pandemics.

45. Moreover, the Agency deserved praise for its pivotal work in enhancing nuclear safety and security and in developing peaceful nuclear applications in cancer research, human and animal health, and agriculture, all of which contributed to the well-being of humanity. The global economic crisis notwithstanding, San Marino was pledging a contribution to the TCF for 2021.

46. Given that the safeguards system was a fundamental tool for international security in the achievement of non-proliferation, his country welcomed the recent agreement reached by Iran and the Agency. As a State party to the NPT, San Marino stood for a world free of WMDs and chemical weapons. Global peace could be achieved if States placed more emphasis on dialogue, negotiation and

trust and invested more in education, development and cooperation than in armaments and wars. Moreover, San Marino looked forward to playing its role in maintaining a safe and secure environment for all.

47. Mr ABID AL-SAHIB (Iraq) said that his Government continued to cooperate with the Agency to rebuild national capacities for the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes in all areas. It was endeavouring to bring the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission Act into force as soon as possible.

48. Thanking the Agency for conducting an impACT Review in Iraq, in cooperation with the WHO, he emphasized that the TC programme, essential for transferring knowledge and technology to Member States, had proved its importance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

49. One of the first Member States to ratify the NPT, Iraq considered its implementation to be the best way to achieve the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Moreover, it supported all initiatives aimed at the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. His country looked forward to taking part in the following NPT Review Conference, at which it hoped that a final document would be adopted including all the fundamental principles for creating the NWFZ, in accordance with the 1995 and 2010 resolutions.

50. Mr REINSALU (Estonia) commended the Director General on the prompt action taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It was impressive that the Agency had not only continued its nuclear safety and security activities despite the pandemic, but had also contributed to mitigating the spread of the virus by distributing technical equipment and assistance to so many Member States.

51. Estonia recognized the Agency's valuable role in the non-proliferation regime and in ensuring that nuclear material and technology were used only for peaceful purposes. Estonia supported the universal and effective implementation of the NPT and underlined the importance of the Agency's safeguards system in the implementation of that treaty.

52. Estonia strongly supported both the JCPOA and the Agency's long-term mission of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments. It was a matter of deep concern that Iran had continued to exceed the agreed limits; it should return to full compliance with the JCPOA. Nevertheless, Estonia welcomed the fact that Iran had agreed to further reinforce its cooperation with the Agency and had provided access to the two locations, as required under the additional protocol.

53. Although a non-nuclear-power country, Estonia benefited from the diversity of nuclear science and technology in medicine, industry and education. Through the Agency's TC programme, Estonia had been establishing its cancer diagnosis and treatment facilities and nuclear medicine centres, while ensuring they had competent, well-trained staff and the necessary equipment. Estonia was in turn sharing with other Member States the valuable knowledge and expertise that it had gained.

54. In the future, Estonia's main challenge would be to build a radioactive waste disposal facility in Estonia by 2040.

55. As climate change was one of the main global challenges, both for multilateral action and regional stability, it was one of Estonia's priorities as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. He therefore welcomed the Agency's decision to devote the year's Scientific Forum to "Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition". The Agency had stepped up its action in climate and environmental-related issues and should continue working in that area. Furthermore, the Agency played a central role in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security framework and assisting States in nuclear capacity building.

56. Mr LISANDRO ROSALES (Honduras) said that his country recognized the Agency's valuable work in contributing to peace and security through the peaceful use of nuclear applications — a duty

shared by all Member States. The Agency's work had a direct impact on the lives of millions of people and contributed significantly to achieving the SDGs.

57. Honduras thanked the Agency for its continued support under the TC programme, which had helped strengthen national capacities for the safe use of nuclear technology, in the area of health in particular. The Agency's cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the donation of equipment, had greatly helped in responding to the emergency. Thanks to the speed with which it had acted in support of Member States, and Honduras in particular, thousands of lives had been saved — early detection had ensured that the appropriate treatment could be given. Meanwhile, Honduras was working to fulfil its commitment to implement projects under the TC programme in compliance with international standards.

58. Honduras would continue to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology for development, as its applications could remedy the recurring problems related to outbreaks of vector-borne diseases and non-communicable diseases such as cancer. Interested in playing an active part, Honduras had been working with representatives of the public and private sectors to build national capacity and create a national network of research laboratories to that end.

59. Lastly, he said that, in the light of the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, socioeconomic recovery would require national and regional efforts, with the support of the international community, to ensure that no one was left behind.

60. Mr ONYEAMA (Nigeria) expressed his country's profound appreciation to the Agency for the support and assistance extended through the provision of COVID-19 detection equipment, personal protective equipment, reagents and kits. Nigeria encouraged the Agency to deepen its cooperation with other international organizations, including WHO, FAO and OIE, to defeat COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases.

61. Nigeria appreciated the Director General's ZODIAC initiative, which would make a crucial contribution to the prevention of future pandemics through the combination of effective surveillance, monitoring, rapid detection and control. His country was optimistic that the initiative would strengthen Member States' preparedness and capabilities to respond to infectious disease outbreaks, especially at the animal-human interface. Nigeria's national veterinary research institute would willingly enter into a partnership with ZODIAC.

62. The theme of the Scientific Forum, "Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition", was both timely and appropriate, on account of the increasingly apparent negative impact of climate change and the role of nuclear energy as a low carbon emitting solution for an energy-deficient world.

63. Nigeria had continued to strengthen the use of nuclear medicine therapy: a recent upgrade and expansion of the radionuclide therapy ward at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, had made the centre a flagship in Africa. Likewise, the private sector had an important role to play in nuclear medicine and radiotherapy; a state-of-the-art private nuclear medicine centre due to open in Lagos later in 2020 would complement other nuclear medicine facilities in the country. Nigeria continued to look forward to the Agency's assistance, especially in terms of capacity building and transfer of technology.

64. Steadfastly committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, the Nigerian Government would continue to support the strengthening of Agency activities, especially in the context of the TC programme. It would also back any decisions to advance international peace and security through the Agency's safeguards and verification activities.

65. Mr COULIDIATI (Burkina Faso) expressed his country's thoughts for the many victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Burkina Faso sincerely thanked the Agency for its outstanding assistance since the outbreak in providing diagnostic and protective equipment and capacity building,

valued at more than 100 million CFA francs. As the actions would have been impossible without extrabudgetary support, his Government thanked all the Member States which had enabled the Agency to respond in such a prompt manner.

66. Burkina Faso's 2020-2021 cycle projects were being implemented in many areas of importance for its socioeconomic development: nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, livestock and crop production, and animal trypanosomiasis management. Results were positive and the implementation rate had stood at 56% on 2 September 2020. Discussions between the Agency and the Insectary of Bobo-Dioulasso regarding its designation as a Collaborating Centre were also very promising. In 2022-2023, Burkina Faso hoped to benefit from five additional projects with a new component focusing on atmospheric nitrogen fixation using cowpeas in order to increase soil fertility.

67. Work on Burkina Faso's cancer centres was under way and their entry into operation was scheduled for early 2021. In the meantime, staff training was continuing and the first specialists were due to be trained in time. Warmly thanking the Agency and the Secretariat for their unfailing dedication, he reiterated his country's desire to work towards the organization's noble aims.

68. Lastly, Burkina Faso welcomed the technical and financial assistance offered by the Agency to AFRA. In recognition of AFRA's importance, his country would support its work by contributing regularly to its Fund.

69. Mr EL-MARKABI (Egypt), recalling the visit to his country by the Director General — whose mandate it supported — to discuss cooperation on achieving Agency goals, said that the new reality and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic would mean setting new priorities for cooperation with the Agency in future years. Technical cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy must go beyond the traditional donor-recipient framework between States. Particular efforts must be made to achieve full partnership in meeting States' sustainable development needs, in particular for those worst affected by the pandemic, through different applications of nuclear technology.

70. Thanking the Director General for his efforts to help Member States overcome the repercussions of COVID-19, in addition Egypt welcomed the ZODIAC initiative. Moreover, his Government reaffirmed its commitment to make its financial contributions to the TCF, in the firm belief that the Fund must be able to ensure the continued effectiveness of the TC programme.

71. Recognizing that application of the safeguards system was one of the Agency's fundamental responsibilities and remaining fully committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the NPT, Egypt underscored the need for the treaty's universalization. His country hoped that the Director General would go beyond issuing standard reports on the application of the General Conference resolution on safeguards and set out a fresh vision for achieving tangible progress, taking into account recent developments, especially in view of the success of the first Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. In that respect, Egypt looked forward to the second session and the Director General's participation.

72. Continuing its efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons, Egypt would again submit to the General Conference a draft resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, in support of the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards system as a prerequisite for establishing an NWFZ.

73. Emphasizing that nuclear security was the responsibility of States, that the right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy was unconditional and that related activities must be funded from voluntary resources, Egypt had endeavoured to reach consensus on the Final Document issued at ICONS 2020.

74. In the meantime, Egypt continued to implement its peaceful nuclear programme with the construction of four NPPs. It had hosted a successful INIR mission and, in the spirit of transparency, Egypt had no objection to the publication of the final report, which reflected his country's full compliance with Agency standards.

75. Mr BLOK (Netherlands) said that, by shipping vital COVID-19 testing kits to dozens of countries, the Agency had clearly demonstrated that global problems could be solved only by working together. The Netherlands had contributed €500 000 to the development and distribution of the kits, which had been of great value in the fight against the pandemic — a global crisis that required a global response. Standing ready to continue its support, his country looked forward to discussing the Agency's new proposal.

76. The Director General and the Secretariat were to be commended for rising to the especially difficult challenge, not only by using nuclear technology as a means for good, but also by continuing important work in difficult circumstances, and setting ambitious goals such as the goal of gender parity at all levels by 2025. In that regard, the Netherlands looked forward to supporting the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

77. Inspections had continued over the preceding few months despite the crisis, including in Iran, with which dialogue had continued. Appreciative of the Agency's ongoing cooperation with Iran, regarding both the JCPOA and safeguards, the Netherlands continued to support the Plan and called on all participants to continue upholding it. Everyone understood that, as the NPT was the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, fundamental to international peace and security, the regime had to be strengthened. As there could be no non-proliferation regime without safeguards, the Netherlands supported the Agency in its efforts to find new ways to verify that nuclear materials and facilities remained in peaceful use. Moreover, it remained committed to a meaningful NPT Review Conference, despite its unfortunate postponement on account of COVID-19.

78. The Agency's importance grew in line with the increase in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. While the Netherlands fully endorsed the right to use nuclear energy peacefully, nuclear material and facilities must not be misused, and the highest safety standards and security measures must be in place. For that reason the Netherlands wholeheartedly supported the Agency's invaluable work.

79. Mr LOGAR (Slovenia), noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had had an immense impact on the international community, expressed his country's satisfaction that the Agency had provided Member States with equipment for the detection and diagnosis of the virus; Slovenia had been one of the first countries to benefit. Acknowledging extrabudgetary and in-kind contributions made by a number of countries, in particular he thanked the USA, one of the first and major donors.

80. Slovenia commended the Agency on having continued all its operations, including verification and monitoring activities in Iran, during an unprecedented crisis. Reiterating his country's support for the JCPOA, he expressed its concerns regarding Iran's reduction of its commitments. Iran should return to full compliance with the JCPOA, a vital international agreement, without delay; all participants should put serious efforts into preserving its implementation.

81. Recalling the importance of CSAs for the maintenance of international peace and security, he called on the DPRK to ratify the CTBT and return to the system of Agency inspections, as the first step to fully denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. He welcomed the Agency's continued readiness to play an essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme.

82. As one of the 30 States with a fully-fledged civilian nuclear programme, Slovenia attached the utmost importance to the Agency's vital contribution in the implementation of the NPT, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Slovenia had high expectations of the upcoming NPT

Review Conference, due to take place in New York in January 2021, and hoped that further steps would be taken to strengthen the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr ALASHI (Libya) took the Chair.

83. Mr HEITOR (Portugal) said that the experience of the previous months had led to a totally new context for science, in particular for nuclear sciences. Society had understood that nuclear science — and science in general — was becoming critical for world peace and global development. In recognition of the crucial role played by nuclear science in cancer treatment, Portugal had developed an action plan to establish a high-level nuclear applications university campus for that purpose.

84. Portugal agreed that greater emphasis should be placed on a better understanding of the role of nuclear sciences in the prevention of zoonotic diseases. He therefore congratulated the Director General on the ZODIAC initiative in view of the critical importance of preventing such diseases worldwide and the important role nuclear science had to play.

85. Lastly, he acknowledged the efforts made by the Agency — under the leadership of the Director General — to bring women into science, and nuclear science in particular. For Portugal gender parity was not a new issue, but it was of great importance in modern society.

86. Ms BEN OUDA (Tunisia) thanked the Secretariat for ensuring the continuation of the Agency's main functions, while providing technical assistance to Member States to tackle COVID-19. In that connection, Tunisia was grateful for the equipment provided by the Agency, which could be used alongside SARS-CoV-2 detection analyses in scientific research to develop sustainable solutions to control and mitigate the risks of the virus. Under a partnership between the country's Ministry of Higher Education and Research and its Ministry of Health, the equipment was being used to set up a research platform to support national R&D capacities in SARS-CoV-2 control. As it looked forward to continued support from the Agency for the project, Tunisia expressed its support for the ZODIAC initiative.

87. Archbishop GALLAGHER (Holy See), conveying the cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope Francis, said that the pandemic had shed new light on the interdependence between nations — in particular, the need to consider health as a primary common good requiring global solidarity and coordinated action. As Pope Francis had stated, humanity was passing through the night of a world already faced with epochal challenges and the pandemic was severely testing the whole human family. It had highlighted the real priorities facing humanity, such as the fight against poverty, the promotion of peace, the undertaking of educational, ecological and health care projects, and the advancement of fundamental human rights.

88. A world of peace, free from nuclear weapons, was the aspiration of millions of men and women. Pope Francis had stated the need to break down the climate of distrust that risked leading to a dismantling of the international arms control framework. The Holy See remained concerned about the signs of an erosion of multilateralism and of the rules-based order, especially in the control and ban of nuclear weapons.

89. Recognizing the Agency's important contribution to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons, the Holy See acknowledged the effective combination of measures taken under the CSAs together with the additional protocols. Furthermore, efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security and to foster a culture of safety had been greatly improved thanks to the Agency's strengthening of networks and forums at the global, regional and national levels.

90. The Holy See expressed its gratitude and appreciation to the Agency for developing strategies to establish and enhance radiotherapy programmes and for helping low and middle income Member States to improve the effectiveness of their radiation medicine services.

91. By way of conclusion he affirmed the Holy See's unwavering support for the Agency's many contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and to the safe, secure and peaceful development and operation of nuclear technologies.

92. Ms NAHLE GARCÍA (Mexico) reiterated that her country recognized the work of the Agency and the active role it played in the area of nuclear energy. As it was such an important issue, Mexico was moving towards renewable energy, by developing techniques and technologies that benefited the environment and, above all, by making technological progress.

93. Mr BALAKRISHNAN (Singapore) expressed his country's support for the Director General and the Secretariat and their efforts to continue safeguards verification and capacity building while providing assistance to Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its technical competence, professionalism and impartiality had earned the Agency, which played a central role in maintaining nuclear safety and security, a high degree of trust from Member States. Singapore hoped that all Member States, including in the Middle East and on the Korean Peninsula, would work with the Agency, uphold and fulfil their commitments, refrain from escalation and renew efforts towards the common goal of a safer world for all. His country did not expect instant solutions to those complex issues but the door must not be closed on peaceful solutions through negotiations. Such solutions were possible with sufficient political will and strong support for the rules-based multilateral system by supporting and cooperating with institutions such as the Agency.

94. As new civilian technologies emerged — nuclear plants, SMRs and advanced nuclear power reactors — the Agency's role in ensuring nuclear safety and security would become even more critical. International legal instruments such as the CNS and the Amendment to the CPPNM were necessary for ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which would instil greater international confidence in the multilateral system.

95. Technical cooperation remained an integral part of the Agency's work; Singapore was confident that the Agency would continue to support Member States in tackling new and evolving challenges, through initiatives such as ZODIAC. Singapore would continue actively and constructively to support its efforts and looked forward to further close cooperation with the Agency, among other things by renewing its Third Country Training Programme.

96. Singapore thanked the Agency for its ongoing work to strengthen ASEAN's capabilities to handle radiation and nuclear technologies and their associated materials and activities in a safe and secure manner. His country looked forward to furthering its collaboration through the Practical Arrangements between the Agency and ASEAN concluded at the sixty-third regular session of the General Conference.

97. Ms GONZÁLEZ LAYA (Spain) thanked the Agency for its response to ensure the continuity of its activities in such exceptional circumstances. The major global challenges faced by the Agency could not be tackled by individual countries alone. Spain was a firm believer in strengthened, effective and inclusive multilateralism based on international law, to offer its citizens global and sustainable solutions. That was a priority for her country's foreign policy, as Spain supported the Agency's work in line with objectives shared by all Member States: nuclear non-proliferation, the safe use of nuclear material and technology, and achievement of the SDGs.

98. Progress in international peace and security could not be made without a firm commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As 50 years had passed since a commitment had been made to end nuclear weapons, more promising results were to be expected. Nevertheless, the Agency had succeeded in the fields of non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and a positive assessment could be made of application of the NPT. The Tenth NPT Review Conference, albeit postponed, offered a new opportunity to make progress and overcome a critical situation.

99. Reiterating its calls for Iran to fulfil its obligations under the JCPOA, Spain considered the Plan essential for improving security and stability in the Middle East. It therefore valued the essential role played by the Agency and the efforts of those countries that continued to participate, in order to resolve the problems and controversies encountered in its application.

100. To maintain the transparent, impartial and consensus-building forum that was required of the Agency, it must be protected from any political or ideological differences that could undermine its reputation. Without the Agency's credibility, progress could not be made in monitoring nuclear proliferation or ensuring the peaceful and safe use of nuclear technologies in important areas such as medicine, as demonstrated in the Agency's cooperation with WHO during the pandemic.

101. Spain thanked the Director General for making his first official visit to Madrid, to participate in the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP25). COP25 was proof of her country's commitment to climate change and to combining constructive multilateralism with national efforts with a view to achieving the SDGs.

102. Spain commended the Director General for making gender equality a priority, as shown through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. As gender equality was a priority under her Government's foreign policy, she called on the Director General to continue along the same path.

103. The last quarter of 2020 was a key period for the Agency, during which it would play a fundamental role. It could count on Spain in its firm belief that international cooperation was the only solution to achieving the Member States' objectives.

104. Mr KARANKEVICH (Belarus) said that sustainable development and a prosperous future were inextricably linked to nuclear technologies. Nuclear energy applications made an important contribution to raising living standards and ensuring a sustainable energy supply without placing a significant additional burden on the environment. The Agency's work on building the capacity of States to combat the COVID-19 pandemic were a good example of the relevance of nuclear technologies. His country was grateful to the Agency for its assistance and to those countries whose financial support had made such assistance possible.

105. Belarus was in the final stage of building its first NPP; the loading of fuel in the first unit had been completed in August 2020. Unit 1 was expected to be commissioned in the first quarter of 2021 and unit 2 in 2022. His country attached the utmost importance to nuclear and radiation safety; the INIR mission to Belarus in early 2020 had confirmed its adherence to the highest safety standards. Belarus greatly appreciated the technical assistance and expertise provided by the Agency regarding the development of nuclear power infrastructure, and considered the tool-kit developed by the Agency to support embarking countries to be highly effective. His country had been systematically implementing the recommendations of the seven consultative and evaluation missions it had hosted in recent years. It also welcomed the support provided by Agency's TC programme and, as in the past, would pay its contributions to the TCF in full and on time in 2021.

106. As it accorded particular attention to nuclear security, Belarus supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen it at the global level. His country welcomed the Agency's work over the preceding year and would continue its open and constructive interaction with the Agency and all interested partners with regard to its nuclear power programme.

107. Mr SOLÁ (Argentina) said that his country's nuclear activities had officially begun 70 years previously, with the landmark creation of the National Atomic Energy Commission in May 1950. Since then, Argentina had developed a robust nuclear programme, mastering the different stages of the nuclear fuel cycle. There were three operational NPPs, while the domestically designed CAREM-25 reactor and an RA-10 multipurpose reactor were still under construction. Moreover, Argentina not only operated

several research reactors, but it also possessed uranium enrichment capacities, and produced nuclear fuel, heavy water and medical radioisotopes. Moreover, his country had consolidated its position as a reliable exporter and continued to do so by investing in R&D and innovation in nuclear technology, thanks to a State policy that continually adhered to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

108. Cooperation in the nuclear sphere between Argentina and Brazil, one of the strongest and most dynamic in the world, was based on trust and political dialogue. As one of the cornerstones of integration between both countries, it uniquely and tangibly contributed to international peace and security. In that respect, ABACC and the bilateral inspections system had firmly guaranteed the international community of the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy in both countries.

109. With regard to COVID-19, Argentina commended ABACC on making supplementary efforts to maintain inspections, noting how its cooperation with the Agency had matured, which had been a crucial factor in the carrying out of verification activities during the pandemic. His country believed international cooperation to be fundamental for promoting the benefits of nuclear energy and its applications and maintaining national development efforts.

110. Argentina welcomed the renewal of ARCAL, which had proved to be a valuable instrument for improving the quality of life in Latin America and the Caribbean.

111. At a time of deteriorating consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Argentina supported the JCPOA, which had represented a step towards finding a comprehensive solution to the disagreement over Iran's nuclear programme and had made a positive contribution to non-proliferation and security internationally. Argentina reiterated the overriding importance of maintaining the negotiation efforts that had helped to establish the Plan.

112. Argentina would be chairing the postponed NPT Review Conference, for which it depended on the support of all States Parties. As the NPT was a key instrument for preserving international peace and security, making progress towards nuclear disarmament and leveraging the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the review process must be strengthened to benefit the international community as a whole.

113. Ms SØREIDE (Norway) commended the Director General and the Secretariat on their professionalism and the Agency on the maintenance of its statutory functions, even during a global pandemic. As Agency safeguards were an essential part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Norway called for universalization of the NPT and for all Member States to conclude CSAs and to sign and ratify additional protocols as the global verification standard. Fully supportive of the JCPOA and all endeavours to preserve it, her country expected full cooperation from Iran regarding compliance with all its safeguards obligations.

114. Norway recognized the right of all NPT States Parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology, while adhering to the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards. As part of its Nuclear Action Plan, her Government continued to support safety and security activities and address nuclear legacy issues in partner countries, for which it had allocated more than US \$200 million over the previous 25 years.

115. In view of the importance of the TC programme and the PUI for the achievement of the SDGs, Norway had contributed €2 million to the Agency's prompt response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

116. Lastly, as it appreciated the Director General's policy on gender parity within the Agency and his efforts regarding women in nuclear security, Norway had been among the first to pledge support for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

117. Mr BALŠEVICS (Latvia) emphasized the wide-ranging nature of the Agency's work, not least its safeguards system under the NPT. Latvia continued to support the JCPOA but was concerned about

Iran's reduced commitments; the Agency's continued verification and reporting activities were of the utmost importance. Iran's announcement to grant inspectors access to two previously prohibited sites was an example of the trust the Agency enjoyed.

118. Latvia called on the DPRK to move towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization; the continuation of its nuclear programme was a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions. Latvia appreciated the Agency's distinct role in verifying the nuclear disarmament of the DPRK — and in strengthening nuclear safety and security worldwide.

119. The Agency should make an expert evaluation of the progress made by Belarus in its implementation of the safety-related measures identified in previous expert missions. As the safety and security of Latvia and neighbouring countries and their inhabitants were at stake, the Agency should issue a clear statement about the safety of the Ostrovets NPP for commissioning.

120. Given the importance of compliance with the highest safety standards and nuclear security guidance, the application of new technologies was crucial for making progress in many areas and the Agency's assistance to the Member States was vital. Latvia placed great importance on improving its nuclear safety, having hosted IRRS and ARTEMIS missions in 2019, the results of which helped the country to improve its regulatory infrastructure — and by extension its radiation and nuclear safety.

121. Latvia commended the Department of Technical Cooperation on its invaluable support to Member States, especially its guidance on adjusting regulatory frameworks. Three national projects had been implemented in his country under the 2018–2019 cycle, and another two had been submitted for 2020–2021. He concluded by thanking the Agency for helping its institutions to strengthen the country's capacity in many areas.

122. Mr KURTYKA (Poland) said that nuclear power remained an important part of the ongoing transformation of his country's energy sector. The recent updates to Poland's long term energy strategy and its nuclear power programme — under which six units with 6–9 GW(e) capacity would be operational by 2043 — would be approved by the Government within months. Poland continued to prioritize improvements to its nuclear safety and security framework. The TC programme was a valuable and visible means of Agency support for pursuing the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

123. Poland participated actively in international safety efforts such as the current NPT review cycle. As the NPT remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the successful outcome of the postponed 2020 NPT Review Conference was of the utmost importance. Only by strengthening organizations such as the Agency could the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda make real progress. In that context, he welcomed the Agency's engagement in implementing UN Security Council resolutions and the JCPOA. Moreover, the Agency should continue to monitor the DPRK's nuclear activities using advanced technology pending the full resumption of its statutory verification activities.

124. The Agency was to be commended on its active engagement in discussions of the role to be played by nuclear energy in combating climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

125. Poland strongly supported the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme — which promised to increase the number of women working in nuclear science and technology — and was prepared to make financial contributions.

126. Ms JOHNSON SMITH (Jamaica) said that, as the first English-speaking Caribbean State to join the Agency 55 years previously, her country continued to enjoy a beneficial relationship with the Agency. Jamaica relied on it for peacefully harnessing nuclear energy to achieve sustainable development and to implement its Vision 2030 national development plan. As a small island and

developing State committed to attaining the SDGs, Jamaica was deeply grateful for the support provided by the Agency under its TC programme through the transfer of nuclear technology and TC resources.

127. The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis had highlighted the importance of collective action to protect human life and health. Her Government was sincerely grateful to the Agency for its support in providing important COVID-19 emergency response equipment. Moreover, Jamaica welcomed the efforts to synergize national development priorities and Agency assistance within the broader UNDAF.

128. Twelve national projects — on health, agricultural production, water quality control, infrastructure development, and coastal and marine pollution — remained active in Jamaica under the 2020–2021 cycle. In particular, the project on ‘Building Capacity for Cancer Diagnostics and Treatment Services Related to Nuclear Technologies’ had resulted in the inauguration of Jamaica’s first nuclear medicine centre for diagnostic imaging in November 2020; and the establishment of a self-contained gamma irradiation facility had been effective in controlling the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and the spread of dengue. In addition, Jamaica’s irradiation infrastructure would enhance the production of certain crops such as ginger and sweet yam.

129. Jamaica noted with great satisfaction that the Agency was implementing safeguards for the peaceful use of nuclear technology in over 180 countries, testament to its indispensable role in promoting cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, and the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Committed to total disarmament, Jamaica looked forward to the NPT Review Conference due in early 2021.

130. In collaboration with the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences, Jamaica was working closely with the Agency on strengthening the region’s regulatory infrastructure to provide for effective cradle-to-grave control of radioactive sources.

131. Thanking the Agency for facilitating human resource capacity building at the country’s Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority, she concluded by reiterating Jamaica’s unwavering commitment to the Agency. Her country hoped to see a continuation of the commendable resilience, innovation and adaptability it had shown in conducting its important work despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

132. Mr OSMAN (Bangladesh) said that his country deeply appreciated the Agency’s serious commitment to its mandate. Despite all the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency had continued its valuable work under the able leadership of the Director General.

133. Bangladesh acknowledged the assistance that the Agency had provided to Member States in their efforts to address the pandemic through the TC project ‘Strengthening Capabilities of Member States in Building, Strengthening and Restoring Capacities and Services in Case of Outbreaks, Emergencies and Disasters’. His country strongly supported the ZODIAC project, which would be an important vehicle for assistance with the pandemic and beyond.

134. Bangladesh highly valued the backing it received through TC projects and was satisfied with its ongoing developments in nuclear science and technology, and the peaceful applications of nuclear energy — including in the areas of energy, health, food security and safety — to assist socioeconomic growth in the country. Those developments aligned well with Bangladesh’s ‘Vision 2021’ and ‘Vision 2041’, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in addition to the SDGs. His country was determined to take its collaboration with the Agency to a higher level.

135. Bangladesh considered nuclear energy to be a safe, environmentally-friendly and economically viable source of generating electricity. Construction work on the Rooppur NPP was under way despite the pandemic, in strict compliance with safety protocols. Unit 1 of the plant would be connected to the

national grid in 2023 and, in the meantime, Bangladesh continued to work closely with the Agency with regard to the NPP.

136. His country was firmly committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in compliance with the relevant safety, safeguards and security measures. While the Agency and Member States were to be commended for organizing the ‘International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts’, and for adopting the Ministerial Declaration, substantial progress was expected to be made at the following NPT Review Conference.

137. Ms MAMMADOVA (Azerbaijan), exercising her right of reply, said that the absurd allegations made against Azerbaijan by the delegation of Armenia should be viewed in the proper context of Armenia’s armed attack on Azerbaijan that had begun on 12 July 2020, when Armenia’s armed forces had deliberately targeted civilian objects in Azerbaijan’s border districts with indiscriminate artillery fire, causing serious damage to civilian infrastructure such as residential buildings, and resulting in deaths and injuries among civilians.

138. According to media reports, Armenia had considered the Mingachevir dam to be a military target. The Office of the President of Azerbaijan had provided official clarification that Azerbaijan had never planned attacks on civilian objects. Her country’s armed forces never targeted civilians or civilian infrastructure, using force against the Armenian military only when under armed attack and in self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

139. Rather than mislead the international community and divert attention from security risks to the region posed by the Metsamor NPP, Armenia should address the concerns of its neighbours about the safety and security of its NPP and transparency in its regard.

140. Mr MANUKYAN (Armenia), exercising his right of reply, expressed his country’s surprise at the reference made by the delegation of Azerbaijan to the UN Charter in trying to justify its right to launch a missile attack on the Metsamor NPP — which his country considered an act of nuclear terrorism. In threatening to launch such an attack on the peaceful NPP, with the aim of inflicting disaster upon Armenia, Azerbaijan should at least refrain from expressing its concerns about the safety of the NPP, which clearly demonstrated its hypocrisy and the real reason behind raising such baseless concerns.

141. The allegations made by Azerbaijan, which Armenia rejected, showed complete disregard for the Agency and questioned its ability to perform its functions. Armenia’s cooperation with the Agency and other UN specialized agencies had been exemplary, with over 40 advisory missions having been conducted on the Armenian NPP, confirming its safe and secure operation. All the mission reports were available for consultation by Member States.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.