

IAEA Board of Governors

Record of the 1236th Meeting
GOV/OR.1236

The Annual Report for 2008

Board of Governors

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Record of the 1236th Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Monday, 15 June 2009, at 10.40 a.m.

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¹ GOV/2009/42.

Attendance

(The list below gives the name of the senior member of each delegation who attended the meeting, as well as that of any other member whose statement is summarized in this record.)

Ms FEROUKHI		Chairperson (Algeria)
Mr SHOOGUFAN	_____	Afghanistan
Mr GALANXHI		Albania
Mr KHELIFI		Algeria
Mr CURIA		Argentina
Mr KRUSE		Australia
Mr VALLIM GUERREIRO		Brazil
Mr SOULAMA		Burkina Faso
Ms GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE		Canada
Mr TANG Guoqiang		China
Ms GOICOCHEA ESTENOZ	}	Cuba
Mr CODORNIU PUJALS	}	Ecuador
Mr STACEY MORENO	}	Egypt
Mr FAWZY	}	Finland
Mr SIRRY	}	France
Ms KAUPPI		Germany
Mr CARON		Ghana
Mr LÜDEKING		India
Ms AMOAH		Iraq
Mr KUMAR		Ireland
Mr ALSHARIA		Japan
Mr COGAN		Lithuania
Mr AMANO		Malaysia
Mr MAKSIMOVAS		Mexico
Mr ARSHAD		New Zealand
Mr CANCHOLA GUTIERREZ		Philippines
Ms MACMILLAN		Romania
Ms DELA ROSA		Russian Federation
Mr FERUTĂ		Saudi Arabia
Mr BERDENNIKOV		South Africa
Mr AL-TAIFI		Spain
Mr MINTY		Switzerland
Mr ROSELLÓ SERRA		Turkey
Mr STEINMANN		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mr ÇELIK		United States of America
Mr SMITH		Uruguay
Mr SCHULTE	_____	Director General
Mr LUONGO CÉSPEDES		Secretary of the Board
Mr ELBARADEI		
Mr ANING		

Representatives of the following Member States also attended the meeting:

Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Abbreviations used in this record:

AIPS	Agency-wide Information System for Programme Support
BSS	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CRP	coordinated research project
C/S	containment and surveillance
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MDG	Millennium Development Goal

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PET	positron emission tomography
R&D	research and development
SAL	Safeguards Analytical Laboratory
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Transport Regulations	Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material
WHO	World Health Organization

* Speakers under Rule 50 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure are indicated by an asterisk.

– Opening of the meeting

1. The CHAIRPERSON welcomed all participants, especially the new Governors, Mr Diallo of Burkina Faso and Mr Barros Oreiro of Uruguay, and the new Resident Representatives, Mr Rijmenans of Belgium, Ms Mangin of France, Mr Gaprindashvili of Georgia, Ms Radulović of Montenegro, Mr Al Hinai of Oman, Mr El Amin of Sudan and Mr Mwape of Zambia.
2. She bade farewell to colleagues who had finished or would shortly be finishing their tours of duty in Vienna: two Governors, Mr Shannon of Australia and Mr Schulte of the United States of America, and Resident Representatives Mr Bhattacharya of Bangladesh, Mr Deniau of France, Mr Dolidze of Georgia, Mr Baah-Duodu of Ghana, Mr Kandie of Kenya, Mr Eldin Elamin of Sudan and Mr Zekoli of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

– Adoption of the agenda (GOV/2009/33/Rev.1)

3. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Board to adopt the revised provisional agenda contained in document GOV/2009/33/Rev.1.
4. The agenda was adopted.

1. Introductory statement by the Director General

5. The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that in 2008 the Agency's technical cooperation programme — which was developed and implemented with the involvement of all departments — had continued to focus on capacity-building, an area in which it had a unique comparative advantage, and on regional cooperation and partnerships with United Nations and other multilateral agencies.
6. As the draft Technical Cooperation Report for 2008 showed, human health had remained the largest area of activity, accounting for over a quarter of all technical cooperation spending: for example, in Africa, support for Ghana, provided with the backing of PACT, had helped the Government to mobilize funding from a range of partners for a national cancer control programme; in Asia, several projects had focused on strengthening nuclear medicine and diagnostic techniques for the management of cancer, with an emphasis on establishing cyclotron and positron emission tomography centres.
7. Capabilities in nuclear medicine for detecting complications of diabetes had been strengthened in several countries. In Mauritius, the prevalence of poorly controlled diabetes had decreased noticeably as a result of the adoption of a more effective intervention approach for management of the disease. In Latin America, two projects to improve nutrition had been completed — one related to the reduction of childhood malnutrition and one on the prevention and control of iron deficiency anaemia.

8. The second largest area of technical cooperation activity in 2008 had been food and agriculture: in Latin America, the main project focus had been on increasing food quality and expanding production, resulting in more rural jobs and a cleaner environment; in the Europe region, soil erosion and land degradation had been addressed — for example, through a project in Tajikistan to provide soil and water conservation techniques as part of a major United Nations-led programme on sustainable land management.

9. Safety had been the third main area of activity, with the emphasis on the management of radioactive waste, particularly in Europe and in Asia and the Pacific. In Central and Eastern Europe, for example, the Agency had assisted countries with the operation of centralized waste processing and storage facilities.

10. The TCF resources had totalled US \$79.9 million in 2008, with a rate of attainment of 94.7%. However, the continuing decline in the value of the US dollar had affected the purchasing power of the TCF. It was hoped that, in future, approximately 40% of the contributions to the TCF would be received in euros, in line with recent payment patterns.

11. Implementation of the technical cooperation programme was a responsibility shared between the Secretariat and Member States. In the Technical Cooperation Report for 2007, several problems affecting implementation rates had been highlighted, such as denials of shipment, customs delays, and onerous security clearance procedures. Unfortunately, those problems had remained in 2008, and it was becoming clear that implementation rates might drop further in 2009. It was essential that Member States and the Secretariat work together to ensure that obstacles to implementation at the national level were dealt with and that Member States had the capacity to implement their technical cooperation work plans.

12. He welcomed the fact that the WHO-IAEA Joint Programme on Cancer Control had been launched in May 2009. That partnership of the Agency with WHO was important for ensuring a coordinated approach to combating cancer in developing countries. At the core of the joint programme were the comprehensive country reviews conducted by PACT and its partners, which had proven valuable in mobilizing resources.

13. He had reported to the Board in March 2008 that FAO had served notice of its intention to terminate the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. Following extensive consultations between the Secretariats of the Agency and FAO, the Agency had received a letter from FAO announcing that the notice of termination was being withdrawn. That very welcome development meant that the valuable 45-year-old partnership between the two organizations would continue. The Joint Division had pioneered the use of nuclear techniques to make food crops more resistant to disease and boost crop yields and had developed tools for the control of major infectious animal diseases, some of which, such as avian influenza, were also a risk to human health.

14. In April, the Agency had held an International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century in Beijing, hosted by the Chinese Government. The conference had been the first high-level nuclear power conference since the start of the global financial crisis. Significantly, no country had reported any scaling-back of its nuclear power expansion plans. Some companies and some countries, notably South Africa, had postponed near-term construction plans for nuclear power, but the important message for the Agency from the conference in Beijing was that it should expect continued high demand for assistance from Member States exploring the nuclear power option.

15. He was concerned about a recurrent discussion among some Member States on whether nuclear security was a core function of the Agency. The global regime for nuclear safety and security was an essential enabler for the further development of nuclear technologies. Risks would always exist in the nuclear field, as in all human endeavours, and the Agency should work to identify and reduce them —

the risks of accidents in the case of nuclear safety and the risks of malicious acts in the case of nuclear security. The Agency's *Fundamental Safety Principles* had long recognized that safety and security measures should be designed and implemented in an integrated manner. At a time when security risks were growing, it would be irresponsible for the Agency — and incomprehensible to the public — not to have a robust, well-funded and independent nuclear security programme.

16. Noting that the Board had before it a draft comprehensive safeguards agreement and SQP for Rwanda and draft additional protocols for Rwanda and Serbia, he said that there were still 26 non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT without comprehensive safeguards agreements in force, for which the Agency could not draw any safeguards conclusions. Since the Model Additional Protocol had been approved, in 1997, the Board had approved additional protocols for more than 130 States. However, additional protocols were in force for only 91 States. There were 20 States with significant nuclear activities that had no additional protocol in force. Additional protocols were central to the Agency's ability to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

17. Also, he requested those States with SQPs that had not yet amended them to do so without delay.

18. The project for enhancing the capabilities of the Agency's safeguards analytical services was progressing with regard to the conceptual planning and design of new laboratories. Tendering for the ultra-high-sensitivity secondary ion mass spectrometer had begun, and the Secretariat planned to complete its installation in the new laboratory space by the end of 2010. He was grateful for the voluntary contributions pledged by a number of countries to upgrade SAL, but the Agency remained far short of the funding target. He was particularly concerned about the situation as regards safety and security issues associated with the nuclear material laboratory at SAL — a situation that would not have arisen if the Agency had had a major capital investment fund with accumulated resources.

19. As indicated in the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2008, the Agency had implemented safeguards agreements in 163 States in 2008. For 51 States with both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol in force, the Agency had been able to conclude that all nuclear material remained in peaceful activities. The Agency was working steadily to reach the same conclusion with respect to all other States with both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol in force.

20. As he had reported on 16 April 2009, the DPRK had informed the Agency that it had decided to cease all cooperation with the Agency, to request the Agency's personnel to remove all C/S equipment from the Yongbyon facilities and to require Agency inspectors to leave the DPRK.

21. He was greatly concerned about the subsequent news of a second nuclear test by the DPRK, particularly at a time when the prospects for progress on nuclear disarmament were far better than they had been at any time in the recent past. A wrong step in the wrong direction had again created an environment of confrontation. All parties should continue working, through diplomatic means, for a comprehensive solution that would bring the DPRK back to the NPT and address its security concerns, humanitarian needs and other political and economic requirements.

22. As regards the report on Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Agency had been able to continue verifying the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran. Regrettably, however, Iran had not implemented any of the measures called for by the Security Council and by the Board of Governors. In addition, there had been no movement by Iran on outstanding issues that needed to be clarified in order to exclude the possibility of military dimensions to its nuclear programme. Without implementation by Iran of the additional protocol and the required safeguards measures, as well as the clarification of outstanding issues, the

Agency would not be able to provide assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities in Iran.

23. He was encouraged, nonetheless, by the new initiative of the United States to engage the Islamic Republic of Iran in direct dialogue, without preconditions and on the basis of mutual respect. There was reason to hope that a genuine dialogue might lead to a comprehensive settlement of many security, political and economic issues spanning over 50 years. A key element of such a settlement should be arrangements for Iran to exercise its right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, while providing the necessary assurance to the international community about the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities. He hoped that Iran would respond to the United States initiative with an equal gesture of goodwill and trust-building, which could include again meeting the Agency's design information requirements and applying the provisions of the additional protocol. It was his hope that the dialogue would begin soon, perhaps with a "freeze-for-freeze" as a prelude.

24. The Agency had continued to investigate allegations regarding the destroyed building at the Dair Alzour site in the Syrian Arab Republic. Regrettably, the limited information and access provided by Syria to date had not enabled the Agency to determine the nature of the destroyed facility, nor made it possible to corroborate Syria's assertions in that respect. In addition to the particles of anthropogenic natural uranium (produced as a result of chemical processing) found in environmental samples taken from the Dair Alzour site, anthropogenic natural uranium particles had been found in samples taken in 2008 from the hot cells of the Miniature Neutron Source Reactor facility in Damascus. The Agency needed to know the origin of the uranium particles found at both sites, which were of a type not included in Syria's declared inventory of nuclear material.

25. He again urged Syria to be fully cooperative and transparent, to provide the additional information and documentation requested by the Agency and to grant access to other locations, including those relevant for the sampling of destroyed and salvaged equipment and debris from the Dair Alzour site. In the absence of an additional protocol concluded with Syria, the Agency's right of routine access to information and locations was circumscribed. However, it would clearly be in Syria's interests, if it wished the Agency to corroborate its assertions, to provide the full transparency required to enable the Agency to clarify all allegations and come to an early conclusion. The Agency was ready to discuss with Syria any modalities for access to relevant sites that would ensure that confidential information was protected while enabling the Agency to perform its verification work.

26. He called upon Israel to share with the Agency all the information which had led it to use force against the Syrian facility without giving the Agency the opportunity to verify the nature of the facility before it was destroyed. He made a similar request to all other States which might have relevant information that could help the Agency to complete its assessment.

27. The agenda for the current meetings of the Board contained an item on a proposal by the Agency regarding the establishment of an LEU reserve under Agency auspices (an IAEA LEU bank) and a proposal from the Russian Federation in support of the idea of an assurance of supply mechanism. The Agency's proposal was rooted in the Statute and envisaged the Agency providing LEU as a fall-back service to Member States. The purpose of the IAEA LEU bank and of the Russian proposal was to provide assurances of supply over and above countries' existing rights. Such assurances would not limit countries' rights in any way, but was intended to avoid a repeat of the type of disruption for political reasons seen in the past.

28. He wished to make it very clear that the proposal for an IAEA LEU bank should not be confused with separate, but complementary, proposals made by himself and others regarding eventual multinational control of the nuclear fuel cycle. He remained a firm believer in the ultimate goal of multinational control of the fuel cycle as an important tool for strengthening the non-proliferation

regime as the world moved towards nuclear disarmament. In his view, there would have to be agreement among all States, in the context of disarmament negotiations, on a universal and equitable mechanism to convert current and future enrichment and reprocessing facilities into multinational facilities. However, that was *not* the subject of the proposals on the agenda for the Board's current meetings.

29. The proposed IAEA LEU bank would be a physical stockpile of LEU at the disposal of the Agency as a last-resort reserve for countries with nuclear power programmes which faced a supply disruption for non-commercial reasons. It would give countries confidence that they could count on reliable supplies of fuel to run their nuclear power plants. The LEU would be available to countries in need on the basis of predetermined non-political and non-discriminatory criteria. It would be accessible to all countries in compliance with their safeguards obligations and would be subject to Agency safeguards. No country would be required to give up any of its rights, including the right to develop its own fuel cycle.

30. The Russian initiative to set up an LEU reserve for the supply of LEU to the Agency would be fully funded by the Russian Federation. It would guarantee the supply of LEU to the Agency for eligible Member States, also in accordance with predetermined criteria. It would complement the IAEA LEU bank by making more material available to the Agency. The Secretariat was ready, at a later stage, to present the two proposals in full detail for the Board's consideration.

31. A number of other proposals were also being developed for future consideration, and a document regarding a proposal by Germany had recently been issued.

32. Turning to the proposed programme and budget for 2010–2011, he emphasized that the budget proposal represented a sound and fully documented estimate of the resources required in order to deliver, in a credible manner, the programmatic activities requested by Member States.

33. Since the recent meetings of the Programme and Budget Committee, alternative proposals had been generated at the initiative of the Chairperson and one of the two Vice-Chairpersons. He greatly appreciated all the efforts to reach consensus, but it was disconcerting to note that, while Member States continued to demand more from the Secretariat, many were reluctant to provide the necessary resources.

34. The proposal regarding a Major Capital Investment Fund (MCIF) was in line with best practice in the private sector and in other international organizations. The MCIF would provide for capital requirements — something particularly important in a technology-based organization. The mechanism would help the Agency to deal with the significant investment backlog resulting from more than two decades of zero-growth policies. He welcomed the broad support for the mechanism, but if the MCIF's resources were sufficient for covering only immediate — 2010 — needs, the fundamental principle of prudent resource accumulation would be undermined.

35. There had been requests for what some had called 'austerity measures'. Keeping the Secretariat as lean as possible had been a top management priority throughout his tenure as Director General. However, travel and the use of consultants, now targeted for reduction, were an integral part of programme delivery, and cuts would entail the risk of delivery delays or a reduction in the quality of the Secretariat's work.

36. Several years previously, external management consultants — in what had become known as the Marnet Report — had concluded that the Secretariat had already identified all significant possibilities for savings, and they had warned that a further focus purely on cost-saving would result in a reduction in the quality of programmes and services. They had stated that: "The Agency needs to

invest in change if it is to improve efficiencies and bring about savings. We believe that savings will come from the change management programme but not without investment of time and money.”

37. As that report had made clear, the only way to achieve additional significant management savings was through the introduction of an enterprise resource planning system (known within the Agency as AIPS). Although Member States recognized the merits of AIPS, it was only after protracted debate that sufficient funding had been secured to initiate the first of the four phases of the AIPS project. Subsequently, in 2008 the Board had directed that the funding for the remaining phases of the AIPS project be included in the Regular Budget. The budget proposal now before the Board responded to that directive. In that connection, it should be recalled that in 2008 the Commission of Eminent Persons had drawn attention to the Agency’s precarious financial position, calling for an immediate cash injection of 80 million euros for pressing infrastructure requirements.

38. He feared the consequences if the Agency were to continue living within the constraints of an entirely inadequate budget. Its ability to maintain an independent nuclear verification system and detect possible diversion of nuclear material and undeclared nuclear activities was already at risk because, for example, its analytical laboratories were outdated and the Agency lacked sufficient access to satellite imagery. Without additional funding, the situation could only get worse.

39. Vulnerability to a repeat of a disaster like the Chernobyl accident would increase if the drastic staff shortages in the nuclear safety area were not addressed. The risk of terrorists obtaining nuclear or radioactive materials and using them in a potentially devastating attack would grow if the problem of the highly inadequate staffing and funding of the Agency’s nuclear security activities were not dealt with. The Agency’s ability to meet the needs of developing countries in the face of growing problems of hunger, poverty and disease, with all their implications for security, would be eroded unless more funding was made available through both the Regular Budget and the TCF.

40. The draft Annual Report for 2008 provided an overview of the wide range of subjects covered by the Agency’s programmes and clearly demonstrated the significant contributions that the Agency was making in both the security and the development field.

41. He was encouraged by the fact that a number of Member States, spearheaded by some major donors, acknowledged the need for a meaningful budget increase. The increase being proposed by the Secretariat was dwarfed by the magnitude and range of the risks that the Agency had to address. The Secretariat was aware of the impact of the global financial crisis, but zero-growth policies had been in effect for some 20 years — many of them years of prosperity. The Agency could continue to struggle with ever greater restrictions and risks, as the quality of its services was eroded, or, with adequate funding, it could make an effective contribution to nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear security and eradication of the scourges of poverty, hunger and disease. It was the prerogative of Member States to determine the size of the budget, but it was his responsibility to state plainly that the consequences of inadequate funding could be dire for world peace and security.

42. On a note of optimism, with the recent commitment made by Presidents Obama and Medvedev to seek a world free of nuclear weapons, starting with a reduction in the nuclear arsenals of their two countries, a new era of arms control had hopefully begun — an era in which the linkage between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation was finally acknowledged. Also, there was now a growing conviction, reflected in many important initiatives, that “Global Zero” was the best long-term option for survival.

43. The new environment would certainly have a major impact on the Agency’s role and mandate. He earnestly hoped that the Agency would rise to the challenge and do its utmost in the service of humanity.

2. The Annual Report for 2008

(GOV/2009/23 and additional information available on GovAtom only)

44. The CHAIRPERSON, introducing document GOV/2009/23, urged Member States' representatives to disseminate the final version of the Annual Report for 2008 as widely as possible in their home countries.

45. Mr CURIA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group had noted with appreciation the support provided by the Agency in the areas of nuclear power plant operation, maintenance and life management.

46. While welcoming the publications issued by the Secretariat as guidance for the more than 50 Member States considering or planning the introduction of nuclear power, the Group of 77 and China wished to emphasize that compliance with the requirements described in those publications should not be made a prerequisite for the provision of technical assistance.

47. The Group of 77 and China, which believed that the success of the nuclear renaissance would largely depend on the availability of a sufficiently large skilled workforce at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, welcomed the publication in 2008 of reports on training and human resource considerations in the commissioning of nuclear power plants and the decommissioning of nuclear facilities.

48. The Group greatly appreciated the work done by the Agency in the area of nuclear reactor technology development through support for CRPs, the organization of workshops, the provision of training and the issuing of publications.

49. The Group, which was looking forward to the publication of the results of the development of common use requirements within the framework of INPRO, would like to see the Agency continuing its efforts to bring about innovation in nuclear power.

50. The Group welcomed the Agency's activities relating to — inter alia — nuclear power reactor fuel engineering, spent fuel management, atomic and nuclear data, research reactors, accelerators, nuclear instrumentation and spectrometry, and nuclear fusion.

51. The Group recognized the benefits derived by Member States from joint Agency-FAO activities relating to — inter alia — the application of nuclear techniques in crop and livestock production systems, the sustainable control of major insect pests, soil degradation, and food quality and safety. It welcomed the publication in 2008 of *Guidelines on Nitrogen Management in Agricultural Systems*.

52. In the Group's view, the Agency should continue helping Member States to attain the MDGs, including through the improvement of agricultural productivity using all the scientific and technical and resources available to it.

53. The Group greatly appreciated the Agency's activities in addressing the needs of Member States in the field of human health, particularly with regard to capacity-building and the enhancement of technical capabilities in nutrition, nuclear medicine and diagnostic imaging and to the associated quality assurance standards and procedures. It welcomed the expansion of the Agency's collaboration with leading cancer organizations and with Member States' cancer institutes under PACT. It also welcomed the finalization of an agreement with WHO for a Joint Programme on Cancer Control, and it commended the PACT Management Office's fund-raising efforts and other activities.

54. The Agency was to be commended for its role in the areas of water resources management and climate change impact assessment through its isotope hydrology initiatives. The Group of 77 and China greatly appreciated the assistance being provided to Member States in their efforts to incorporate isotope hydrology into their national water resources management programmes. It welcomed the release in 2008 of an *Atlas of Isotope Hydrology - Asia and the Pacific*, following the release in 2007 of an atlas covering Africa.

55. Using nuclear techniques, the Agency was playing a unique role in helping to assess the impact of climate change, in the assessment and management of the marine and the terrestrial environment and in helping to establish safety and quality standards for seafood. The Group commended the Secretariat for conducting CRPs and implementing technical cooperation activities in response to Member States' needs in the areas in question.

56. The Group was pleased with the Agency's support for R&D work relating to radiopharmaceuticals for use in PET, to therapeutic radionuclide generators and to radiation-processed natural polymers for use in health care, agriculture, industry and environmental studies.

57. The Group greatly appreciated the Agency's support for CRPs on the development of radionuclide generators to cater for the needs of Member States that had no radioisotope production facilities. In that connection, it would like to see the Secretariat undertaking a detailed study on ways of strengthening national capabilities for ensuring the availability of radioisotope supplies, including through the better utilization of research reactors in developing countries for radioisotope production.

58. In view of the importance of Agency technical cooperation for sustainable socio-economic development in Member States, the Group of 77 and China would like to see a strengthening of the technical cooperation activities — and the other promotional activities — of the Agency through the provision of sufficient resources to meet the growing needs of Member States.

59. While the primary responsibility for nuclear safety and security rested with States, the Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the Agency's nuclear safety and security activities. In its view, nuclear safety was an integral part of any nuclear programme, and the Group had consistently supported the Agency's nuclear security activities, the aim of which was to assist Member States in improving their nuclear security infrastructures. The Group continued to believe, however, that nuclear safety and security considerations should not be allowed to hamper the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, especially in developing countries.

60. The Group of 77 and China, which was pleased that in general the safety of civil nuclear programmes worldwide — including in developing countries — had remained at a high level in 2008, welcomed the Agency's support to Member States in enhancing their nuclear regulatory infrastructures.

61. The Group, which commended the Secretariat for the part played by it in the revision of the BSS, looked forward to receiving the draft revised version for comment. It attached great importance to the Secretariat's role in helping developing countries, at their request, to use the BSS.

62. Besides coordinating the revision of the BSS, the Secretariat had recently helped to organize the Fourth Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Third Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention, at which the importance of the Agency's safety requirements and guidelines had been reaffirmed.

63. The Group, which had noted that since 1958 more than 200 safety standards had been published by the Agency, once again wished to emphasize that the Agency's safety standards were not legally binding. At the same time, it welcomed the assistance provided by the Secretariat, at their request, to

Member States, particularly African ones, in assessing their nuclear safety and security needs with a view to enhancing their capabilities to search for orphan radioactive sources.

64. In the Group's view, the lessons from the emergency preparedness and response exercise conducted in Mexico in July 2008 would help to improve the systems that would be required in an actual emergency.

65. The Group, which greatly appreciated the organization by the Secretariat of workshops on radioactive material shipment denials, would like the Secretariat to continue exploring ways of avoiding such denials.

66. Regarding the efforts under way to improve the radiation safety infrastructures of Member States, the Group welcomed the development of the new information management system IMSIMS.

67. Regarding medical uses of radioactive materials, the Group welcomed the recent Agency publications focusing on new techniques and the Agency training materials made available to health workers. It would like to see the Secretariat continuing to provide comprehensive guidance on the radiation protection of patients.

68. The Group of 77 and China, which agreed that confidence in the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management was an important factor in the public acceptance of nuclear energy, welcomed the launching of the International Project on Demonstrating the Safety of Geological Disposal (GEOSAF) in 2008.

69. Mr BAZOBERRY (Bolivia)*, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that, in view of the projections pointing to a significant rise in the use of nuclear power, and the fact that access to adequate and reliable sources of energy was essential to development, GRULAC hoped that the Agency would continue providing support to those Latin American and Caribbean countries which were thinking of embarking on nuclear power programmes or of expanding their existing programmes.

70. GRULAC, which agreed with the Secretariat regarding the need for a sufficiently large skilled workforce at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, would like to see it intensifying its efforts in the human resources area. In that connection, it welcomed the introduction of 'technology supported learning' by the Agency in cooperation with the Asian Network for Education in Nuclear Technology and the Latin American Energy Organization.

71. It also welcomed the organization by the Agency of meetings on uranium exploration, best practices in uranium mining and milling, advanced mining and milling methods and equipment, mine remediation and associated environmental issues.

72. In addition, GRULAC welcomed the Agency's efforts to stimulate innovation in nuclear power through INPRO and through activities relating to, inter alia, non-electric applications of nuclear power such as hydrogen generation and seawater desalination.

73. GRULAC greatly appreciated the Agency's efforts in helping Member States to increase their capacities in the areas of disease prevention and control, food security and agricultural productivity, and water resources and environmental management.

74. GRULAC welcomed the assistance being provided to countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region in areas such as soil conservation, Mediterranean fruit fly eradication and food safety. It had greatly appreciated the regional technical cooperation project on strengthening laboratory capacity to assess the implementation of good agricultural practices in the production of fruit and vegetables in Latin America (RLA/5/050).

75. In the area of human health, GRULAC welcomed the Agency's continuing initiatives in support of the fight against cancer, especially through PACT. The Secretariat was to be commended on the partnerships entered into and the funds obtained by it as part of that important programme.

76. GRULAC welcomed the establishment of guidelines on quality management in nuclear medicine, as such guidelines were essential for the appropriate use of ionizing radiation in cancer treatment — an area where it would like to see the Agency further intensifying its efforts to strengthen the capacities of developing Member States, most of which lacked sufficient cancer treatment specialists.

77. GRULAC welcomed the publication in 2008 of a technical document presenting the results of studies conducted in Latin America on the application of isotope methods in characterizing hydrological systems with a view to improved decision-making in water management. As regards the completed technical cooperation project relating to the Guaraní aquifer, which was shared by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, GRULAC would like to see the studies in question broadened with a view to the production of hydrological maps covering the whole of Latin America.

78. GRULAC hoped that the Agency's technical cooperation project on the use of nuclear techniques to address management problems of coastal zones in the Caribbean would serve as a basis for continued Agency involvement in the efforts to address such problems there.

79. GRULAC, which was pleased that the safety and security of civil nuclear installations around the world in recent years had remained at a high level, believed that the responsibility for nuclear safety and security rested primarily with States. At the same time, it greatly appreciated the role of the Agency — which was to be congratulated on the 50th anniversary of its safety standards programme — in helping States to improve their nuclear safety and security infrastructures.

80. GRULAC attached great importance to the IRRS as an international mechanism for the sharing of regulatory knowledge and experience among senior regulators, particularly senior regulators in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

81. With regard to incident and emergency preparedness and response, GRULAC attached great importance to the Agency's Response Assistance Network and Incident and Emergency Centre, the capabilities of which had been tested during the ConvEx3 (2008) emergency exercise carried out in Mexico in July 2008.

82. GRULAC, which would continue to support the activities of the International Steering Committee on Denials of Shipment of Radioactive Material, welcomed the establishment of a database for recording instances of shipment denial.

83. Regarding the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, GRULAC endorsed the request made by participants in the May 2008 meeting on lessons learned from implementation of the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources for international assistance in developing regional networks and in using existing networks to discuss implementation of the Guidance.

84. With regard to nuclear security, GRULAC hoped that the Agency would continue helping States to meet the nuclear security challenges associated with hosting major public events, such as the Latin American and Caribbean–European Union Summit held in Peru in May 2008.

85. GRULAC greatly appreciated the technical cooperation programme for 2009–2011. It was confident that the programme, which was the result of careful selection and evaluation and took account of national and regional development priorities, would substantially enhance the impact of Agency technical cooperation in Member States.

86. Mr SCHULTE (United States of America) said that the draft Annual Report for 2008 highlighted the importance of the Agency as an organization that was relevant to the challenges of today and tomorrow and that deserved the full support of Member States.

87. Speaking two months earlier in Prague, President Obama had warned that the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons was the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War and that, in a strange twist of history, although the threat of global nuclear war had declined, the risk of a nuclear attack had grown. More nations had acquired nuclear weapons. Testing had continued. The black market in nuclear secrets and materials remained a threat. The technology for building nuclear weapons had spread. There were terrorists determined to buy, build or steal a nuclear weapon. The international efforts to contain the resulting dangers were centred on a global non-proliferation regime, but, as more and more people and nations broke the rules, the point might be reached where the centre could not hold.

88. President Obama had noted that one nuclear weapon exploded in one city — be it New York or Moscow, Islamabad or Mumbai, Tokyo or Tel Aviv, Paris or Prague — could kill hundreds of thousands of people, and, no matter where it exploded, there would be no end to the consequences for global safety and security, the global economy and — ultimately — human survival.

89. As the President had put it, the United States, as a nuclear power and the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, had a moral responsibility to act, and he had committed the United States to seeking “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.”

90. President Obama had set out a three-point agenda for realizing that bold vision.

91. First, he had committed the United States to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy and urging others to do the same; to negotiating a new strategic arms reduction treaty with the Russian Federation in the course of 2009; to immediately and aggressively pursuing ratification of the CTBT by the United States; and to seeking a new treaty that verifiably ended the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

92. Second, he had expressed a commitment to strengthening the NPT as a basis for cooperation, saying that the basic bargain was sound: countries with nuclear weapons would move towards nuclear disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons would not acquire them, and all countries could have access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. To strengthen the NPT, he had called for “more resources and authority to strengthen international inspections”; “real and immediate consequences for countries caught breaking the rules or trying to leave the Treaty without cause”; “a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation, including an international fuel bank, so that countries can access peaceful power without increasing the risks of proliferation”. He had said that there must be binding rules and that it was essential to meet the immediate challenges posed by the DPRK and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

93. Third, the President had called for action to ensure that terrorists never acquired a nuclear weapon — “the most immediate and extreme threat to global security”. He had announced a new international effort to “secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years”, and he had called for further international efforts to “break up black markets, detect and intercept materials in transit, and use financial tools to disrupt this dangerous trade”.

94. President Obama had called for the transformation of efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism into “durable international institutions”, and he had announced that the United States would host a nuclear security summit within the next year.

95. The President's speech in Prague meant that there would be much to do in Vienna, within both the CTBTO and the Agency.

96. As regards the Agency, the Board needed to ensure that it had the increased resources necessary for playing its essential role in the global non-proliferation regime. For its part, the United States was in favour of a significant increase in the Agency's Regular Budget. Also, it was substantially increasing its voluntary contribution for 2009, and, if Congress agreed, it intended to contribute still more in the coming years. More resources were needed for nuclear safety, security and safeguards, particularly as more and more countries expressed an interest in nuclear power. The United States, which accepted the fact that other Member States had other priorities, was ready to support a budget that addressed the priorities of all Member States.

97. President Obama had called for "a world without nuclear weapons" and other world leaders agreed with that vision. However, the realization of that vision required a strong Agency. Accordingly, all Member States should support the efforts of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairman Ferutã to bring about an agreement on a significant real increase in the Agency budget.

98. Besides more resources, the Agency needed more authority in order to strengthen international inspections. As everyone knew, the Agency did a good job of accounting for declared nuclear activities, but recent proliferation challenges, such as those posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic, had involved undeclared nuclear activities. The Agency's ability to detect and deter undeclared nuclear activities would become even more important as the international community strived to bring about a world without nuclear weapons. The Obama Administration strongly supported the Director General's call for universalization of the Model Additional Protocol as part of a new international standard for verification. Additional protocols not only assisted the Agency in looking for undeclared nuclear activities; they were also important for confidence-building as more and more countries embarked on nuclear power programmes. Countries committed to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful utilization of nuclear technology should also be committed to the Model Additional Protocol. Increased Agency authority must be backed by a willingness on the part of Member States to cooperate and a willingness on the part of the Secretariat to use that authority. If States obstructed investigations, the Agency must be willing to exert in full the authority provided by its Statute, by safeguards agreements and, in special cases, by the Security Council.

99. The Agency must continue its investigation of Iran and Syria and be prepared to support, as required, the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

100. Speaking recently in Cairo, President Obama had stressed his Administration's desire to overcome decades of mistrust between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. With regard to the nuclear issue, he had said that a decisive point had been reached, and that the issue was not simply one of United States interests, but of preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead that region and the world down a hugely dangerous path. At the same time, the President had stated that every nation — including Iran — should have the right to "access peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities" under the NPT.

101. The Board's task was to support the Agency's inspectors as they verified the compliance of Iran with its responsibilities under the NPT and verified the application of the additional confidence-building measures required by the Board and made mandatory by the Security Council. The Board should encourage Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency's inspectors and to take the steps necessary for convincing the world that its activities did not have a military dimension.

102. The Agency had an important role to play in building a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation so that countries might have access to nuclear power without increasing the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation. Nuclear fuel supply assurances constituted a first step in that regard.

The United States was in favour of the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank and welcomed the proposal regarding a nuclear fuel reserve made by the Russian Federation. As President Obama had said in Prague, no approach would succeed if it was based on denial of the rights of nations that played by the rules.

103. The two concepts that the Board would be considering during the current week neither denied nor jeopardized any NPT rights. Rather, the proposed nuclear fuel bank and nuclear fuel reserve would help enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace as envisaged in the Agency's Statute. Without impinging on countries' rights or the Agency's Regular Budget, they would benefit Member States that wanted nuclear fuel supply assurances in support of their nuclear power programmes or plans.

104. The Agency had an important role to play in helping to ensure — as urged by President Obama — that terrorists never acquired a nuclear weapon. Nuclear security, like nuclear safety, was the responsibility of States, but, as with nuclear safety, the Agency could, under its Statute, play a key role in the broader international efforts to improve nuclear security and implement Security Council resolution 1540, particularly by helping to establish a global nuclear security culture, setting high standards for the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities, and assisting States in their efforts to attain and maintain those standards. Nuclear security was occasionally dismissed as a special interest of a few countries, but, as President Obama had pointed out in Prague, terrorist use of a nuclear weapon anywhere in the world would have terrible consequences everywhere in the world.

105. Countries everywhere recognized the importance of nuclear security. For example, 94 countries belonging to the Group of 77 had requested and benefited from Agency nuclear security assistance, and more than 65 countries belonging to the Group of 77 had been represented at the Agency's recent International Symposium on Nuclear Security. About 75 per cent of the Agency's activities financed from the Nuclear Security Fund were taking place in countries belonging to the Group of 77.

106. The Agency's nuclear security efforts were of interest and of benefit to all, for, as President Obama had said in Prague, one terrorist with a nuclear weapon could unleash massive destruction. The leaders attending the Global Summit on Nuclear Security that was to be hosted by President Obama would want to know that the Agency was doing its part in helping to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

107. In Prague, President Obama had presented a bold vision and a broad agenda, stressing that the United States could lead, but could not succeed on its own. What was needed was a new Spirit of Vienna — a spirit of consensus based on a common appreciation of the Agency, its important technical mission and its essential role in implementing the NPT; agreement that the NPT's basic bargain remained sound but that the NPT needed to be strengthened in order to meet today's challenges; and a shared readiness to give the Agency the requisite resources, authority and support.

108. The new Spirit of Vienna would have to result in action and not just words, for, as the President had said in Cairo, it would be action and not words that determined the path of progress.

109. All countries shared an interest in promoting development, securing their energy supplies, protecting the environment, stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, avoiding new nuclear arms races and striving for a world without nuclear weapons. Hence the importance of a new Spirit of Vienna.

110. Mr CURIA (Argentina) said that his country attached great importance to the establishment of sound and sustainable national and regional radiation safety and transport safety infrastructures, including effective regulatory systems.

111. Given the possibility of a rapid expansion of nuclear power worldwide, sustainable education and training in radiation protection, nuclear safety, radioactive materials transport safety and the safe management of radioactive waste were essential. Following the conclusion of a long-term agreement

between Argentina and the Agency, his country was now a Latin American and Caribbean regional hub for sustainable education and training those areas.

112. His Government considered the regional exchange of information on radiation and nuclear safety to be very useful, and in 2008 Argentina and the other members of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies had exchanged a great deal of such information.

113. As regards the relationship between nuclear security and nuclear safety, it was stated in the draft Annual Report for 2008 that three guides had been issued in 2008 in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series, but no mention was made of how compatible they were with the Agency's safety standards. Also, no mention was made of the fact that those three guides had not been evaluated by the safety standards review system set up by the Board.

114. The Secretariat was continuing to speak of "nuclear security" in connection with "the threat of a malicious act involving nuclear or other radioactive material", but the Agency's safety standards were intended to prevent unauthorized actions that could lead to irregular situations like nuclear accidents and over-exposure to ionizing radiation. Such unauthorized actions might be malicious acts, or they might simply be the results of human error. Thus the concept of 'nuclear safety' was broader than that of 'nuclear security' — something that should be made clear in Agency documents.

115. The Annual Reports of the Agency were made available to the general public, so that the Secretariat had to be very careful when drafting the section on Verification, which was an extremely delicate subject. In Argentina's view, however, that section could nevertheless be drafted in such a way as to make it more comprehensible to the general public, with strong emphasis on the benefits of Agency safeguards — for example, their role in promoting confidence among States and facilitating international cooperation in the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

116. Also, Argentina was concerned about the references in a publicly available document to the limited nature of the safeguards conclusions that the Agency could draw in the case of countries without an additional protocol in force. In its view, such references could be counterproductive, blurring the perception of the effective verification work done by the Agency and belittling the fact that the vast majority of the countries with just comprehensive safeguards agreements in force were complying fully with their obligation to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes — a fact that did not come across clearly in the document now under consideration.

117. His delegation hoped that the Secretariat would revise the Verification section of the draft Annual Report for 2008 in the light of the comments on it just made by him.

118. Also, it would like the final version of the document under consideration to reflect what the Secretariat had done, pursuant to a request of the General Conference, to ensure the wide participation of developing countries in the 12th Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA 12), held in Buenos Aires in October 2008.

119. Mr SIRRY (Egypt) said that, given the growing interest in harnessing nuclear energy for the production of electricity, particularly among developing countries, Egypt welcomed the Agency's efforts in helping developing countries to assess their energy needs and launch nuclear power programmes on a sound scientific basis.

120. His country also welcomed the Agency's support for technology transfer and the dissemination of best practices. At the same time, it would like to see the Agency doing still more to disseminate nuclear knowledge and promote training in various fields of particular interest to developing countries.

121. Egypt welcomed the Agency's efforts to assist Member States in confronting challenges in areas such as food security, human — especially child — health and water resources management.

122. Egypt welcomed the Agency's efforts to strengthen international cooperation in the area of nuclear safety, since the growing interest in nuclear power needed to be accompanied by a growing interest in nuclear installation safety, in safety in the transport of radioactive materials, in the safe management of radioactive waste, and in nuclear emergency preparedness.

123. Preserving the excellent safety record in the nuclear field was decisive for the future of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and Egypt therefore welcomed the technical assistance provided through the Agency to nuclear regulatory authorities in Member States.

124. As regards safety in the transport of radioactive materials, Egypt was well aware that the transport of such materials entailed risks to health and the environment, and hence to economic development. It was therefore committed to complying with the Agency's Transport Regulations and all other relevant regulations, and it would like to see all States, especially the shipping States, complying with them and acceding to all relevant international conventions, including those relating to legal liability.

125. Egypt was concerned about the shortcomings of the present safeguards regime. The Agency was unable to apply comprehensive safeguards in States that had not acceded to the NPT, and no serious steps had been taken by the five nuclear-weapon States towards fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT.

126. In particular, Egypt would like to see the universal application of comprehensive safeguards, as the non-application of safeguards to most nuclear installations and material in States not parties to the NPT and in the five nuclear-weapon States constituted a grave threat to mankind.

127. Mr CANCHOLA GUTIERREZ (Mexico) said that his country attached great importance to the Agency's activities, especially those relating to food and agriculture, human health, water resources management, insect pest control, industry and research, which were making valuable contributions to socio-economic development in many countries.

128. Mexico greatly appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to spread the word about the development benefits of cooperation in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. It particularly welcomed the fact that the Secretariat was producing publicity material not only in English, but also in Spanish and French. Also, the Secretariat was to be commended for holding a seminar on the aforementioned development benefits in Geneva for Member States that had no permanent mission in Vienna.

129. The Agency was to be congratulated on the 50th anniversary of its safety standards programme. Its safety standards were an important element of the global nuclear safety and security regime.

130. His country's Federal Electricity Commission and National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards were pleased with the success of the ConvEx-3 emergency exercise held in Mexico in July 2008.

131. Mexico would continue to support the Agency's activities aimed at strengthening the physical protection of nuclear facilities and material and radioactive sources as part of the efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism.

132. Mexico greatly appreciated the Agency's verification activities. Thanks to credible inspections, the Agency was able to assure the international community that no nuclear material subject to safeguards was being diverted and no nuclear facilities subject to safeguards were being put to inappropriate use.

133. Regarding possible shortages of skilled workers in the nuclear field, Mexico considered that there was a need to improve education and training in nuclear science and engineering.

134. Mr TANG Guoqiang (China) said that his country welcomed the establishment of the Agency's Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) service. It was sure that the service would be of great help to countries that were thinking of embarking on nuclear power programmes.

135. China, which was grateful for the support it had received from the Agency in ensuring nuclear security at the Beijing Olympic Games, attached great importance to the role of the Agency in helping Member States to improve their nuclear security systems and ensure nuclear security at large-scale public events.

136. The Agency was doing very useful work in areas such as food and agriculture, environmental protection and cancer prevention and therapy. His country attached great importance to there being an appropriate balance between such promotional activities, which were of great benefit to developing countries, and the safeguards activities of the Agency.

137. China's nuclear power industry had entered a new stage of rapid development. At present, there were in China eleven nuclear power plants with a total installed capacity of 9100 MW(e) in operation and 24 nuclear power plants with a total installed capacity of 25 400 MW(e) under construction. It was to be hoped that the development of China's nuclear power industry would serve as a model for many developing countries in the region — countries that China stood ready to help through the provision of training.

138. His Government was sure that China's nuclear power industry would benefit greatly from Agency technical cooperation project CPR/4/032 (Enhancing the Capabilities of National Institutions Supporting Nuclear Power Development), which had been approved by the Board in 2008.

139. His Government had demonstrated the great importance that it attached to nuclear power by hosting the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century, which had been organized by the Agency and held in Beijing in April 2009. The concluding statement by the President of the Conference had been issued by the Agency in document INFCIRC/756.

140. Ms MACMILLAN (New Zealand), welcoming the Radiation and Transport Safety section of the draft Annual Report for 2008, said that her country placed high priority on the objective of establishing global radiation and transport safety policies, criteria and standards, and achieving a global harmonization of their application for the safety and security of radiation sources, and thereby raising the levels of protection of people against radiation exposure.

141. In her delegation's view, the final version of the document under consideration could usefully include more information on the Agency's activities relating to transport safety, especially safety in the maritime transport of radioactive material. It might, for example, include a reference to the Agency's participation in the informal discussions between shipping States and coastal States, given the progress that was being made.

142. Mr CODORNIU PUJALS (Cuba) said that his country attached particular importance to the Agency's activities in the areas of energy planning and assessment, human resources development and nuclear knowledge preservation as they were essential for the sustainable expansion of nuclear power. Cuba had been participating in those activities for several years and was now sharing what it had learned with other countries in the region.

143. Cuba welcomed the initiative of the Department of Nuclear Energy aimed at bringing together the Agency's expertise in energy planning and in the use of nuclear techniques in climate, groundwater resource and land use studies.

144. His country was grateful for the support provided by the Agency to the Cuban scientists who had recently developed a new line of drought-tolerant tomato.

145. A very important role in developing and disseminating nuclear applications was played by the Agency's coordinated research programmes. In 2008, Cuban scientists had been involved in 27 CRPs.

146. Cuba, which had participated in the ConvEx-3 emergency exercise held in Mexico in July 2008, believed that the experience gained through the exercise would be of great use to many countries.

147. Thanks in no small measure to assistance received through the Agency, his country had established a nationwide system for the monitoring of all persons occupationally exposed to ionizing radiation. Cuban experts in occupational radiation protection were making their experience available to other countries in the region.

148. Cuba greatly appreciated the work being done by the International Steering Committee on Denials of Shipment of Radioactive Material but, given the fact that the shipment denial problem was getting worse, believed that the efforts to deal with it should be intensified.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.