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Delegates are kindly requested to bring their own copies of documents to meetings.

Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
Biological Weapons Convention	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on their Destruction
CERN	European Organization for Nuclear Research
Chemical Weapons Convention	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECU	European currency unit
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
INIS	International Nuclear Information System
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
MOX	Mixed oxide
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
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
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PHARE	European Union programme of assistance for economic restructuring in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Transport Regulations	Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material
Wassenaar Arrangement	Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997 (continued)
(GC(42)/5)

1. Ms. MÄKELÄINEN (Finland) endorsed the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union and said that the Union's view that high-priority programmes should be fully justified meant that the activity should fall within the Agency's sphere of competence and that the work was not already being done elsewhere. In that context, she noted that the Director General would be attending the fortieth anniversary celebration of the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD later in the month and would be discussing the proposal to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between the NEA and the Agency that would delineate possible areas and modes of co-operation. There would undoubtedly be many areas in which co-operation and co-ordination would be possible. However, the responsibility for avoiding duplication and overlap lay not only with the two agencies: the Member States of the NEA should remain vigilant in that respect, both in Vienna and in Paris.
2. Turning to the Agency's programme for 1999, she said that while the application of radioisotopes or radiation played a significant role in solving certain problems, in many cases new techniques were replacing nuclear techniques and the Agency should no longer be involved in activities where non-nuclear techniques were more suitable. That position was not always reflected in the proposed programme for 1999. Under the present budgetary constraints experienced by so many Member States, programmes which did not fall within the Agency's statutory responsibility could not be justified, particularly since a large number of high-priority activities were currently being run by cost-free experts or funded from voluntary contributions. The senior expert group appointed by the Director General should look closely at those issues.
3. Finland had remained flexible with regard to the Agency's severe budgetary constraints. It had not supported the zero growth principle per se and had always paid its due share of the Regular Budget and the Technical Co-operation Fund without delay. On several occasions, however, it had stated that the budget should be decided only after the programme had been discussed. The present situation, in which a number of priority activities, largely safeguards programmes, were financed through voluntary contributions, was not satisfactory. The problem was basically caused by the need to balance the safeguards and promotional activities, but the fact was usually overlooked that not only the technical co-operation programme, but also all the nuclear applications programmes and, to a large extent, the nuclear power programmes were promotional activities. In financial terms, therefore, the promotional part of the Agency's work far exceeded the regulatory part.
4. Finland noted with pleasure the rapidly increasing number of States which had signed an additional protocol to their comprehensive or voluntary safeguards agreements. The previous day, the 15 Member States of the European Union had made a notable addition to that number, not only in terms of the number of signatures, but also in terms of the quantity of new activities to be covered by the Agency's safeguards system. The huge amount of new work awaiting the Agency through the implementation of all the additional protocols called for a complete rethinking of the system. The procedures required to carry out the new duties should not simply be added to the existing system, but an integrated safeguards system

covering both old and new tasks should be developed. Finland welcomed the Director General's initiative in that direction. Such integration would in turn have consequences on the thinking of the whole non-proliferation community and the concept "full-scope safeguards" might require a new definition.

5. Mr. POOLOKASINGHAM (Sri Lanka), having welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency, commended the restructuring measures initiated by the Director General aimed at improving efficiency. Sri Lanka had highlighted the need for measures to maintain a truly independent and competent international civil service at the forty-first session of the General Conference. It was therefore very pleased at the Agency's recent decision to adhere to its Statute and no longer require government sponsorship for staff recruitment.

6. The Agency's technical co-operation programme had helped Sri Lanka to use nuclear technology to improve health care facilities and to increase agricultural and industrial productivity. The Model Project concept, Country Programme Frameworks and Integrated Evaluation Framework would no doubt contribute to increasing the socio-economic benefits of the technical co-operation programme and to ensuring that it was better oriented towards end-users. However, due consideration should be given to the vastly differing conditions in Member States when formulating country programmes.

7. Sri-Lanka appreciated the efforts of the Deputy Director General for Technical Co-operation and his staff to improve the technical co-operation programme. The guidelines for planning and designing technical co-operation projects and the national workshop on technical co-operation project design, management and evaluation had helped Sri Lanka to design projects which were likely to generate socio-economic benefits in 1999-2000. Sri Lanka also welcomed the proposals, set out in the Technical Co-operation Report for 1997, to establish long-term partnerships between Member States and qualified institutions for the purpose of technology transfer, which would allow recipient Member States to develop their capabilities in a consistent manner.

8. The reduction in resources allocated to the technical co-operation programme since 1995 and the resulting difficulties faced by the programme was a cause for concern and he appealed to all Member States to pay their contributions. The Government of Sri Lanka, despite the financial constraints it faced, was paying both its contribution to the TCF and its assessed programme costs. His Government had recognized the role that nuclear technology could play in national development and had allocated 70 million rupees for the construction of a building to house the laboratories of the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka and was making available adequate resources for the development of the laboratories.

9. Under the Regional Model Project on Upgrading Radiation Protection Infrastructure, Sri Lanka had been able to improve its regulatory programme and would be in a position to conform to the Basic Safety Standards in the near future. The Sri Lankan delegation appreciated the Agency's efforts in that regard.

10. The RCA had brought considerable benefits to its members, including Sri Lanka. While Sri Lanka welcomed the improvements that were being made to the RCA's management structure, it felt that there should be close consultation between the Agency and the Member States on the implementation of RCA programmes.

11. The end of the Cold War had given rise to new concerns, one of which was trafficking in nuclear materials and the possibility of acts of nuclear terrorism. The Agency, while helping Member States to strengthen their national regulatory infrastructures, should concentrate on upgrading their systems for the physical protection of, accounting for and control of nuclear materials.

12. Following the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan in May 1998, Sri Lanka had expressed the view that the security of the region could not be considered in isolation and that there was an increased need for efforts by the entire international community to achieve global nuclear disarmament and, eventually, the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In 1995, no organization had existed which dealt specifically with nuclear testing, but since then the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO had been established. That institution, together with the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, were the appropriate ones to deal with issues of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Furthermore, since the Board of Governors had spent considerable time in June discussing the recent nuclear tests, he saw no need for the General Conference to discuss the matter.

13. The Heads of Government at the NAM Summit in Durban earlier that month had reiterated the need for an action plan to achieve total elimination within a specified time and had called for an international conference to be held, preferably by 1999, to agree on such a plan. The international community should not focus on the issue of non-proliferation at the expense of nuclear disarmament, nor should it focus on horizontal proliferation at the expense of vertical proliferation.

14. The NAM Summit had noted the establishment of the ad hoc committee on negative security assurances and commended the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. It had also reiterated its endorsement of the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention, while noting with concern the persistence of undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes and emphasizing the need for transparency in that regard. It had also called on nuclear-weapon States to comply with Article VI of the NPT, recognized the need for an instrument to prohibit attacks or threats of attacks on nuclear facilities used for peaceful purposes, and welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of a resolution to convene a fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

15. Mr. LIPÁR (Slovakia) welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency and endorsed the statement by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

16. Noting that the conclusion of additional protocols to safeguards agreements made a significant contribution to global nuclear non-proliferation, he recalled that the Board of

Governors had approved the text of the new agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the NPT and an additional protocol to that agreement. Other Member States which had not already done so should accelerate the process of concluding additional protocols.

17. It was regrettable that the DPRK's compliance with respect to verification activities remained limited and that there was a fundamental difference of view between the Agency and the DPRK regarding the status of its safeguards agreement. The Director General's initiative to provide the DPRK with a copy of the Model Additional Protocol was a good one. The DPRK should co-operate fully with the Agency in the implementation of its safeguards obligations and negotiate the conclusion of an additional protocol.

18. Slovakia much regretted Iraq's decision to suspend its co-operation with the Security Council and the Agency, and urged Iraq to observe the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Secretary-General.

19. The issues of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament had become the focus of great attention since the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan. Slovakia believed that nuclear energy should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that there should be universal and unconditional adherence to the NPT and CTBT. For its part, Slovakia had ratified the CTBT in March 1998. Slovakia believed that co-operation between the Agency and the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO should be strengthened for political, technical and financial reasons.

20. Slovakia supported the Director General's offer of assistance in connection with the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and welcomed the reduction of existing stockpiles of fissile material by nuclear-weapon States and the results of the recent negotiations between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and of the United States, especially on the management and disposal of plutonium withdrawn in stages from nuclear military programmes.

21. With regard to the action plan which had emerged from the senior management meeting earlier in the year, the initiative to place greater emphasis on programme and budget formulation by creating a new programme co-ordination committee was welcome in view of the financial difficulties of the past ten years. The process of optimizing resource allocations to maintain the Agency's principal functions should be further evaluated and developed with the aim of achieving greater cost-effectiveness for the benefit of all Member States.

22. A more active public information service would contribute significantly to public understanding of the advantages of nuclear energy and at the same time increase public confidence. The Agency should in particular publicize the improvements achieved in nuclear safety in Member States and use the most modern and effective tools, such as the Internet, and high-quality materials and publications to help promote a positive attitude towards nuclear energy among the public. In that connection, he noted that the international public information seminar hosted by Slovakia earlier in the year had been a great success.

23. Slovakia was about to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the commissioning of the first WWER reactor at Bohunice and the launching of an extensive programme for the construction of nuclear power plants of that type in former Czechoslovakia. Nuclear power in Slovakia, which had been one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and expected to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management by the end of the year, was one of its most effective, reliable and safe power sources.

24. The four WWER-440 units at Bohunice had very good safety records. A number of international missions, mainly from the Agency, had reviewed the design and operational safety of the reactors and concluded that operation was safe, but that further safety improvement was possible and feasible. A comprehensive safety improvement programme was under way to improve safety and missions by the Agency in February and in June had concluded that satisfactory progress had been made in that respect.

25. The first unit of the Mochovce power plant had reached criticality on 9 June 1998, and the commissioning of unit 2 was planned for 1999. The Mochovce nuclear power plant was an example of international co-operation to achieve internationally acceptable safety standards, with companies from France, Germany, the United States, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as the Agency, having been involved. The Agency's services in particular were an essential component of international transparency in all safety-related matters.

26. Following a joint request by the Slovak and Austrian Governments, the Agency had assembled an independent group of internationally recognized experts to examine the reported embrittlement of the reactor pressure vessel of unit 1 at Mochovce. The experts had concluded that the integrity of the reactor pressure vessel gave no cause for concern.

27. In connection with resolution GC(41)/RES/21, the Slovak Government had decided in July 1998 to contribute a sum of ECU 2.5 million to the Shelter Implementation Plan for the Chernobyl sarcophagus, despite its budgetary difficulties and the natural disasters which had occurred in Slovakia during the year. On a related subject, he noted that an agreement between Slovakia and Ukraine on the early notification of nuclear accidents and on the exchange of information and co-operation in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection was expected to be signed during the General Conference.

28. On 1 April 1998, the Slovak National Council had approved the Atomic Act which governed the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Slovakia, as well as the rights and obligations involved in the utilization of nuclear energy, the requirements of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and also commitments arising from other international treaties and agreements. It was also fully compatible with European Union legislation in that area.

29. Before concluding, he noted with regard to Article VI of the Agency's Statute that although Slovakia was not in favour of amending the Statute, it was prepared to support any proposal that was acceptable to regional groups and at the same time reflected the interests of its own region.

30. Mr. ADAM (Belgium), having endorsed the statement made on behalf of the European Union, said that along with its European Union partners his country had signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement, and hoped that other States would very soon do likewise since universal application of the Model Additional Protocol would help ensure peace and security throughout the world. In that connection, it would be useful if the Agency were to draw up specific proposals for submission to the Board in the near future regarding possibilities of reducing routine inspections as a way of compensating for the increased obligations assumed by States and other parties to safeguards agreements in connection with implementation of the Model Additional Protocol.

31. Turning to technical co-operation, he said that the quality and management of the Agency's technical co-operation projects had improved significantly in recent years; the Agency was to be congratulated, in particular, on the eradication of the tsetse fly from Zanzibar, in which Belgium had been proud to participate through its extrabudgetary contributions. Belgium would be contributing again to the TCF as of 1999, and would also continue to finance the co-ordinated research programme for the development of new banana genotypes, which were expected to make an important contribution to the self-sufficiency in terms of food of certain developing countries.

32. In the area of nuclear safety, Belgium was playing an active part in the contact expert group for international co-operation on radioactive waste management in the Russian Federation. Belgium was also continuing to contribute to the Agency's very useful extrabudgetary programme on the safety of RBMK and WWER reactors in Eastern Europe.

33. He was grateful for the initiatives already taken and those that would be taken in the future to improve the operation of the Agency and to streamline the work of the General Conference and the Board of Governors. In that connection, he looked forward to proposals from the Secretariat for revitalizing the meetings of the Board.

34. It was difficult to speak of the Board without referring to the question of the amendment of Article VI of the Statute. For a long time Belgium had been in favour of a limited increase in the size of the Board so as to ensure better representation of States with significant nuclear programmes, and that was why Belgium was supporting the proposals of the Chairman of the Board which aimed to provide a global solution to all questions relating to the Board's size and composition.

35. In 1997, Belgian nuclear power stations had broken all productivity records and the production of electricity from nuclear sources now represented 60.2% of total production. Those results were due to the fact that the nuclear power plants had been operational for approximately 90% of the year.

36. There had been much discussion regarding the utilization of fissile material surpluses resulting from the dismantling of nuclear weapons, and the recycling of plutonium of military origin as MOX fuel had received particular attention. Belgium, which was very concerned about the existence of so many stocks of plutonium of military origin, intended to play an active part in their elimination and recycling for civilian purposes. In fact, the firm Belgonucléaire was the pioneer of MOX fuel fabrication, having begun industrial production of MOX for light-water reactors in 1986; to meet the new demands, a substantial modernization programme was under way, with some \$36 million having been invested over the past four years.

37. The Belgian nuclear authorities regarded the safety of installations as being of prime importance and were undertaking a huge modernization programme. The safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel also received a great deal of attention since a solution to the problem was crucial to the future use of nuclear energy, especially for the purposes of electricity production. Both the Tihange and Doel nuclear power plants had received authorization to operate interim and long-term storage facilities for their spent fuel. Radioactive waste from the decommissioning of earlier facilities was stored at buildings of Belgoprocess and the CILVA waste processing facility had sufficient capacity to meet Belgium's requirements in the area of low-level solid and liquid waste. Through a slight increase in their prices, electricity producers had set aside resources to cover the costs of managing the radioactive waste resulting from the future decommissioning of power plants. A special fund had also been set up for the management of existing waste.

38. On the basis of the report presented by the National Organization for Radioactive Waste and Fissile Material (ONDRAF) on the various options for the long-term management of low-level and short-lived waste, the Government had decided to move away from long-term storage to final disposal and had asked ONDRAF to continue its studies so that a choice could be made between near-surface and geological disposal of such waste.

39. As to the fuel cycle, no final choice had yet been made between reprocessing and disposal of spent fuel as further research was required. Belgium was therefore very keen to participate in the working group established by the Agency on fuel cycle options, and was pleased to note that its mandate did not overlap with work being undertaken in other forums.

40. Internationally, Belgium, like other Western countries, was continuing with its efforts to improve the safety of nuclear installations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1997, Belgian engineers working with European consortiums had contributed their expertise to more than 30 projects in Eastern Europe, such as the modernization of the nuclear power plant in Novovoronezh, the management of the units at Kalinin and South Ukraine nuclear power plants, the production of a simulator for the Beloyarsk nuclear power plant, and the management of radioactive wastes and the storage of spent fuel in the North-West of the Russian Federation. Belgium had also provided consultancy services in a number of Republics of the former Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

41. Mr. KASTCHIEV (Bulgaria), having associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, said that, as a State Party to the NPT, Bulgaria firmly

believed that it was the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and that it should be universalized and effectively implemented. Bulgaria also supported the early entry into force of the CTBT and welcomed the recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to conduct negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Bulgaria had therefore been deeply concerned over the nuclear tests carried out earlier in the year by India and Pakistan, and called on both countries to adhere to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

42. As a keen supporter of the Agency's programme for a strengthened and more cost-effective safeguards system, Bulgaria had signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency. The Agency's safeguards system was of universal benefit and would remain the key element in providing assurances that nuclear activities were being carried out only for peaceful purposes - assurances that were a prerequisite for the transfer of nuclear technology, equipment and material. Bulgaria accordingly welcomed the conclusion in the Annual Report for 1997 that the Agency had not found any indication of diversion of nuclear material or of the misuse of safeguarded facilities, equipment and non-nuclear material.

43. Illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources had become a new challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime in recent years, and while the prime responsibility lay with Member States to ensure adequate physical protection and to establish effective national systems for accountancy and control, Bulgaria recognized the growing importance of international co-operation as well as the valuable role the Agency could play by co-ordinating measures to assist in areas such as the exchange of information and training. National export control mechanisms were also an important tool for preventing nuclear proliferation.

44. Turning to safety issues, he announced that Bulgaria would be signing the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management during the current session of the General Conference and that it was considering measures to achieve full correspondence with the requirements of the Joint Convention. As a Contracting Party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Bulgaria had submitted to the Agency a report on the measures it had taken to implement the obligations of the Convention pursuant to its Article 5. Bulgaria highly appreciated the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection and the management of radioactive waste, and in particular its work on safety assessment of WWER reactors.

45. The Agency's technical co-operation activities were important for the peaceful application of atomic energy in many Member States, including Bulgaria, which welcomed the improvements in the management of the technical co-operation programme and the Agency's results in transferring nuclear technologies, training specialists, and providing expert services and equipment to Member States.

46. The Agency's programme for 1999-2000 was well balanced and its activities relating to safeguards, technical co-operation and nuclear and radiation safety were all high priorities. Bulgaria supported the programme as well as the proposed budget for 1999. Bulgaria had

paid in full its pledged contribution to the TCF for 1997 and 1998, as well as its assessed contribution to the Regular Budget for 1997 and the share in US dollars for 1998. It hoped to pay the remaining Austrian schillings share in the next few months. Its voluntary contribution to the TCF for 1999 would be the equivalent of \$10 000 in national currency.

47. In Bulgaria, 41.4% of total electricity generation was from the nuclear power units of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant. Measures continued to be implemented in 1997 to enhance the plant's safe operation, with completion of the third stage of the programme for the reconstruction, safety upgrading and backfitting of its units 1 to 4 and modernization of its main technological systems. A new programme for the enhancement of the safety of units 1 to 4 to ensure safe operation until the end of their design lifetime had been drawn up and submitted to the Bulgarian Nuclear Safety Authority. The programme for modernizing Kozloduy units 5 and 6 had also been drawn up by the operator and approved. Implementation of the programme had begun in the middle of 1998 and would be carried out jointly by national and foreign companies, including Westinghouse and a consortium of Siemens, Framatom and a number of Russian organizations.

48. In using nuclear power and ionizing radiation sources, which were widely employed in medicine, agriculture, industry and scientific research, Bulgaria took appropriate measures to ensure nuclear safety and radiation protection. The Agency's assistance in those areas was greatly appreciated. The IRRRT mission conducted by the Agency in November 1997 had concluded that the basic organization and structures for regulating the use of atomic energy, including competent and dedicated staff, were in place. Measures had been developed to implement the recommendations made relating to inspections and the assessment of nuclear safety and radiation protection. The Bulgarian Government was also considering a programme to strengthen the regulatory regime with respect to nuclear safety and radiation protection, bringing it more into line with that of the European Union with the updating and elaboration of more than 30 normative acts in the period 1998-1999.

49. Bulgaria had benefited from excellent co-operation with the Agency's Department of Nuclear Safety and with its Department of Technical Co-operation. It was grateful for the Agency's assistance in connection with the application of electron beam technology for the purification of flue gases at the Maritza 2 thermal power plant, the management of the consequences of uranium mining and the improvement of the safety of the Novi Han radioactive waste repository. It was also grateful to the Agency for providing training for its specialists through fellowships and visits. Bulgaria accepted specialists from other developing countries for training in its institutes and organizations, and its institutes and universities also took part in the Agency's research programmes. In addition, Bulgaria had been participating in regional projects connected with the operational management and safety assessment of nuclear power plants, licensing fuel and fuel modelling codes for WWER reactors, the disposal of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste and the marine environmental assessment of the Black Sea region. It also co-operated in the nuclear field with neighbouring countries and had signed intergovernmental agreements in the past year with Turkey and Romania.

50. Ms. OK (Turkey), having congratulated the President on her election, urged full implementation of resolution GC(41)/RES/19 on equal representation of the sexes in the Secretariat, particularly at senior levels, in keeping with the increasing number of women representatives in senior posts in the Agency's policy-making organs. She also warmly welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency.

51. A large number of tasks had been added to the Agency's traditional functions. It was particularly gratifying, after many years of controversy, that the Agency had started to give more attention to nuclear safety issues. The safety of nuclear reactors and the safety of the transport of nuclear and radioactive materials were as important as non-proliferation and safeguards. A reasonable balance had to be struck between technical co-operation activities and safeguards and safety issues. Developing countries in particular should be given adequate Agency support in developing their peaceful nuclear technology for use in areas such as energy, medicine, agriculture and the environment, which were vital to their economic development. Unless the Agency increased technical co-operation for the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries, the gap between the rich and poor would widen causing a serious setback to the global economic integration objectives of the year 2000.

52. Turkey was committed to the principles of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It had been one of the early signatories of the NPT and CTBT and had submitted the text of the latter to parliament for ratification. She had also had the honour of chairing the Joint Consultative Group on IAEA/CTBTO Co-operation. Turkey was a party to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and had joined the Missile Technology Control Regime in April 1997. In addition, it was a full member of the Wassenaar Arrangement and was in the process of joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group. It was also a member of INIS, the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD and an observer at CERN.

53. In parallel with those commitments, the Turkish Government was taking steps to promote peaceful nuclear energy in the country. The Turkish Atomic Energy Agency was carrying out nuclear technology studies. The national model reactor which had been planned, using indigenous sources as far as possible, would have an important role in the transfer of nuclear technology to Turkey. Quality assurance studies in relation to the safety of the planned nuclear power plant, on media information and on advanced non-destructive technology were also under way. Nuclear methods were also being used in Turkey in many areas, including health, the environment, radiopharmaceuticals and agriculture.

54. Turkey had always strictly abided by the provisions of the NPT and consistently encouraged all countries to accede with a view to giving greater weight to the appeal to nuclear-weapon States for rapid and effective progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. However, although there were currently 186 States Parties to the NPT, there were still some States which, for one reason or another, preferred not to join the non-proliferation regime, thereby creating a serious threat to international peace and security in general.

55. Turkey deeply regretted the nuclear weapons tests in South Asia in May and remained concerned about the regional and global implications of those tests. In that connection, it associated itself with those countries which had called on India and Pakistan to adhere to the

NPT and the CTBT as soon as possible and to solve their bilateral problems through negotiations.

56. That development had indicated once again the need to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones wherever possible and feasible. As the establishment of such zones had a direct bearing on the security of States within their defined regions and on the existing military balance, the desire to establish them had to come from all the States concerned, with strict observance of the principle of undiminished security. Furthermore, the presence or absence of other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, and the prevailing political atmosphere in the region were relevant factors which should be taken into consideration by all the States concerned.

57. The establishment in Geneva of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, with the participation of States committed to non-proliferation, including Pakistan, was an important milestone. Such a treaty would result in new verification tasks for the Agency. In that context, Turkey supported the idea of establishing a special fund in the Agency to finance future verification activities associated with a fissile material cut-off treaty.

58. Turkey had been strongly in favour of increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system and had played an active role in the negotiations on the Model Additional Protocol. It had already initiated negotiations with the Secretariat for an additional protocol and welcomed the conclusion of additional protocols by ten other countries.

59. Illicit trafficking in nuclear material was an important issue for the Agency. The Turkish delegation had repeatedly stated in meetings of the Board and the General Conference that illicit trafficking had a transboundary dimension and that measures at the national level alone could not solve the problem. The international aspects of the problem could only be addressed through a binding international instrument covering all aspects of illicit trafficking, bearing in mind in particular that the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material was not binding. A binding instrument would commit the parties to ensuring the control and security of radioactive sources and reporting any losses or thefts of such sources to the Agency. To underline the importance of the issue, Turkey had proposed in the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference that the Committee should include in its report an invitation to all States with nuclear materials on their territory to accede to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and a call to all States to start immediately, and conclude at the earliest possible date, negotiations on a new, legally binding international instrument controlling illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. In that context, the meeting of the ad hoc committee established by General Assembly resolution A/RES/51/210 to negotiate a convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism had provided a new opportunity for considering measures to combat illicit nuclear trafficking, which was an extremely important aspect of nuclear terrorism.

60. The issue of adequate water supply and the sustainable development and preservation of the quality of existing scarce resources had attracted the attention of United Nations agencies

and relevant international, regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations. In that connection, the Agency was already taking action to promote the more extensive use of isotope hydrology to produce a visible socio-economic impact on the assessment, development and management of water resources at the national, regional and international levels, as recommended by several previous sessions of the General Conference. The creation of centres of excellence in different regions to provide the necessary support for the more effective implementation of the technical co-operation programme and to achieve long-term sustainability in nuclear applications would certainly contribute substantially to that goal. Turkey hoped that the laboratory established in 1965 in Ankara with full-scale analytical capabilities for isotope applications in the water and environmental sectors could be considered as such a centre.

61. The safe transport of radioactive material was an issue which should be of concern to all States through which radioactive waste was transported by land, sea or air. The internationally recognized right of innocent passage, which was of utmost importance and utility to all countries, could clearly not overshadow the right of human beings to live in a safe environment and precautionary measures should therefore be taken both by the transporting and transit States to protect people and the environment. The only way to ensure such safe transport was for all States both inside and outside the Agency to observe the same rules and regulations.

62. As a follow-up to the previous year's work, the Conference was to be asked to adopt the report of the Secretariat on legally binding and non-binding international instruments and regulations concerning the safe transport of radioactive materials and their implementation. That report also drew attention to the inadequacies of the system. Efforts should consequently be made to find ways and means of making the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material universally applicable and binding on all States. To that end, interested countries, including Turkey, had submitted a draft resolution to the Conference containing a programme of action to make implementation of the Transport Regulations more effective and universal. Turkey was well aware that many Member States were sensitive about that crucial issue, but was confident that the draft resolution would obtain the support it merited.

63. Mr. KADRI (Algeria) pointed out that, in a rapidly changing world, the Agency had demonstrated its ability to adjust and rise to new challenges, while continuing to respond to the legitimate demands of the developing countries for technical co-operation and assistance for development through the increased use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Algeria had benefited from high-quality Agency support for economic and social projects under the technical co-operation programme. Africa as a whole had made a considerable effort to implement the technical co-operation strategy, as witnessed by the high project implementation ratio of over 80%. Algeria had recorded a ratio of over 90% per cent and had taken due account of the technical co-operation strategy pursued by the Agency in preparing its requests for technical assistance in the period from 2000 to 2002. It was important that the technical co-operation programme should keep pace with advances in the use of nuclear technology.

64. Algeria attached the utmost importance to the issue of the financing of technical co-operation and welcomed the re-establishment of a working group in the Board of Governors to study ways and means of making the resources for financing the technical co-operation programme predictable and assured and to establish indicative planning figures for the next cycle. Algeria had approved the change from a three-year to a two-year cycle and found it logical that the Regular Budget cycle should coincide with the TCF planning cycle. However, the target figure for 1999 and 2000, which had been frozen at \$73 million, fell far short of technical co-operation requirements. The targets for 2001 and 2002 should therefore be increased by a considerable amount, given the flexibility that the developing countries had displayed regarding the first two years of the cycle.

65. The Agency's Member States had a moral duty to ensure that the financing of the technical co-operation programme was predictable and assured. While the recipient countries certainly bore considerable responsibility for technical co-operation activities, an even larger share of responsibility lay with the donor countries. A joint effort by all concerned was therefore necessary to ensure that a vital component of the Agency's mandate - promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy - was successfully implemented.

66. The application of safeguards was another cornerstone of the Agency's mandate and Algeria, as a party to the NPT, had concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency and entered into negotiations concerning subsidiary arrangements. It had also been involved in the negotiations on the Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements, an important step that had appropriately coincided with the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and had contributed to the enhancement of the non-proliferation regime. Algeria intended in due course to commence negotiations with the Agency on an additional protocol.

67. His country was also a party to the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa and fully supported the States that were endeavouring to establish a similar zone in the Middle East. The fact that a single State stood in the way of that project was a problem not only for the Middle East, but also for Africa whose nuclear-weapon-free zone served little purpose if its neighbours failed to follow suit. Algeria was extremely concerned about Israel's obdurate attitude to the international community and its persistent refusal to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. The international community should abandon its policy of double standards, which undermined the credibility of its efforts to free the world from weapons of mass destruction.

68. Algeria had registered with regret the recent nuclear tests in South Asia, which had demonstrated the need for more resolute action to achieve the aims of disarmament, including the elimination of nuclear weapons. In that connection, Algeria endorsed the final declaration on disarmament and international co-operation adopted at the NAM Summit held recently in Durban, South Africa. Although the NPT remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, it had hitherto failed to achieve the basic goal of full and comprehensive disarmament. Algeria believed that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament were two closely related issues and reaffirmed the dual proposal it had made to the Disarmament Commission for the establishment of a special committee on nuclear disarmament and a special committee

on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

69. The amendment of Article VI of the Statute had long been a matter of concern for a large number of States and he appreciated the efforts of the Chairman of the Board of Governors to reach a compromise solution. Twenty-two years previously, Algeria had stressed the need to expand the membership of the Board in order to reflect changing circumstances and make the Agency more democratic and universal, and it fully endorsed the position of the Africa Group on the issue at the current session. It might be helpful, however, to draw attention to a number of points of particular relevance. The Agency had amended Article VI in 1970 to increase the number of Board members from 25 to 34 and again in 1984 to enable China to occupy a seat. A number of African States had recently applied for membership of the Agency and in that connection he welcomed the admission of Benin. As a result, the Africa Group was now the largest group and would undoubtedly grow further in the near future. If no amendment were made, it was conceivable that 50 African States would be obliged to share two elective seats in the Board of Governors, a clear case of under-representation. While Algeria was ready and willing to work for a compromise solution, it was committed to the African proposal, which faithfully reflected the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the States that had given it their support.

70. The idea of a linkage between different components of the Article VI issue had been conjured up for the benefit of an individual State. It was an unreasonable and unjustified position and the entire international community was being held hostage as a result. The membership of a regional group should be determined by the group itself and there was no justification for imposing a particular country on its members, especially when that country had neither acceded to the NPT nor placed all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. Besides, everyone was well aware of the current situation in the Middle East, where the peace process had ground to a halt. It was that situation which had prompted the Arab States to request the inclusion of the item entitled "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat" in the agenda of the General Conference. The capabilities in question posed a real threat to peace and security both within the region and beyond, and should be a source of concern not only to the Arab States but to all members of the international community. Israel's accession to the NPT and the placing of all its facilities under Agency supervision would constitute a major step towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and, conversely, its refusal to do so constituted a rejection of peace.

71. With regard to the participation of Palestine in the work of the Agency, he urged the Conference to upgrade its status at least to the level specified in General Assembly resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998.

72. Algeria was committed to applying strict nuclear, radiation and waste safety standards to all nuclear activities in nuclear installations and research laboratories and to activities involving the use of radioactive materials. It had acceded to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and had recently established an Atomic Energy Commission whose programme of priorities included the consideration of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Convention on

Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Algeria also planned to establish the various organizational and safety mechanisms provided for in Agency instruments and to strengthen existing mechanisms.

73. Lastly, he announced that Algeria intended shortly to pay its financial contribution to the Agency's Regular Budget for the current year and its contribution to the TCF for the year ahead.

74. Mr. VAJDA (Hungary), having endorsed the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, including Hungary, said that, in spite of certain recent undesirable developments in the nuclear field, there had been clear progress in strengthening international relations in order to ensure that nuclear energy was used only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind. Efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime had played a key role in that regard.

75. Since the Agency's safeguards remained a fundamental element of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Hungary welcomed the Agency's elaboration of a strengthened safeguards system and its efforts to negotiate and conclude additional protocols with Member States. Hungary had already started negotiations with the Agency on an additional protocol and intended to conclude them at an early date and submit the additional protocol to parliament for ratification. It also intended to continue its Agency safeguards support programme.

76. The Hungarian Government welcomed the recent decision by the Conference on Disarmament to create an ad hoc committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty which, when concluded, would be an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Agency should provide assistance in drawing up and implementing the verification arrangements for such a treaty. That would be a challenging task for the Agency in terms of the probable scope and financial implications of the verification arrangements, and Member States should therefore provide the necessary political support and financial resources.

77. The approach of the twenty-first century brought new challenges and there were several areas where international consensus was still lacking, such as safety, liability, radioactive waste and public acceptance of nuclear energy. Nevertheless, an international regime on nuclear and radiation safety had emerged during the 1990s, as demonstrated by the legally binding international conventions, globally agreed international safety standards and provisions for facilitating the application of those standards. The Convention on Nuclear Safety would help to focus the nuclear community's attention on safety issues and in that context Hungary was looking forward to the forthcoming organizational meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. As stated in its national report to be submitted to that meeting, Hungary had made nuclear safety a top priority and had fulfilled all the conditions stipulated in the Convention.

78. It had been repeatedly affirmed that a technically competent, independent regulatory authority with adequate resources was a central element in maintaining nuclear safety in each

country. As part of its efforts to enhance nuclear safety, Hungary had taken steps to improve its regulatory system and established a new legal framework that was in line with the latest international standards. In doing so, it had received assistance from the Agency, the European Union and Member States. In that connection, Hungary wished to invite the Agency to conduct an IRRT mission in order to give assistance in further improving regulatory practice in Hungary.

79. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was another recent major achievement. It had already been signed and ratified by Hungary, whose new Atomic Energy Act conformed fully to the Joint Convention's provisions. Under the Act, the Central Nuclear Financial Fund and a non-profit company had been set up. The Fund's exclusive purpose was to finance the construction and operation of facilities for the final disposal of radioactive waste, interim storage and final disposal of spent fuel, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Payments into the Fund had started on 1 January 1998 and, in the case of nuclear power plants, payments made to the Fund by the licensee were to be taken into account when pricing electricity.

80. Hungary was making efforts also to increase transparency about its nuclear activities and, in that context, the Chairman of the Hungarian Atomic Energy Commission was due to submit a comprehensive report to parliament on the safety of atomic energy applications.

81. Nuclear energy remained an essential component of Hungary's energy supply and the Paks nuclear power plant continued to perform well in terms of both electricity generation and commitment to safety. A periodic safety review of units 1 and 2 of the Paks plant had been completed and a review of units 3 and 4 had been started which would cover aspects of environmental impact and emergency planning for the whole site.

82. Hungary, which was both a beneficiary of and contributor to the technical co-operation programme, welcomed the efforts made to improve the Agency's technical co-operation activities during the previous year. The recently launched Model Project to establish the Centre for Emergency Response, Training and Analysis (CERTA) for the Hungarian Atomic Energy Commission was of particular importance and Hungary appreciated the assistance received from the Agency, the European Union and the British Government in that regard. Hungary hoped to be able to test and demonstrate CERTA's operation in November, when it was to host an international emergency exercise (INEX-2). Hungary was keen to share the benefits of technical co-operation with other countries. It acted as a host country for the Agency's fellowship and training programme and intended to pledge its target contribution to the TCF for 1999. It urged other Member States to pay their shares on time.

83. Finally, he noted that an international symposium on modernizing the liability regime for nuclear damage, organized by the NEA and the Hungarian Atomic Energy Commission, would be held in Hungary the following June and would provide an opportunity to work towards a global nuclear liability regime.

84. Mr. NGUYEN XUAN HONG (Viet Nam), having welcomed the Republic of Benin, said that his country strongly supported all the Agency's initiatives and efforts in the field of nuclear safety and radioactive waste management. Viet Nam had recently received assistance from the Agency, the Republic of Korea, Japan and other countries of the region in setting up a nuclear safety and radioactive waste management infrastructure. Viet Nam planned to introduce some 800-1000 MW of nuclear power capacity into its electricity generating system by 2010 or 2015. The demand for electricity by that time was expected to be in excess of 100 billion kWh. It was therefore important for a nuclear safety regulatory infrastructure to be established without delay in Viet Nam. With the assistance of Agency experts, a legal framework for radiation protection had been designed in compliance with the Agency's Basic Safety Standards.

85. Viet Nam was grateful to the Agency, and in particular to its Department of Technical Co-operation, for providing assistance in nuclear applications in various sectors of the economy. They were increasingly needed not only in industry and agriculture, but also in the areas of health and environmental protection. Public acceptance of radiation technology after four years of operating the Hanoi Irradiation Centre had led the Government of Viet Nam to sponsor and to provide partial financing for an establishment in Ho Chi Minh City for the sterilization of medical products.

86. Mr. AL-ATHEL (Saudi Arabia) said that optimists tended to focus on the enormous benefits to be gained from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Others, more aware of its inherent dangers, focused on the enormous responsibilities it entailed in terms of ensuring high safety levels, guarding against its use for military purposes and freeing the world from nuclear weapons. The Agency had a fundamental role to play on both fronts.

87. He thanked all participants in the Conference who had supported Saudi Arabia's candidacy for a seat on the Board of Governors and promised that his delegation would do its utmost to prove itself worthy of the confidence placed in it, representing the Middle East and South Asia Group, and working for just, realistic and practicable decision-making in the Board.

88. Saudi Arabia regularly paid its contributions to the Regular Budget at the beginning of each year and it supported the Board's recommendations concerning the Agency's programme and the Regular Budget estimates for the years 1999 and 2000. With regard to the financing of technical co-operation and the difficulties in recent years in obtaining voluntary contributions to the TCF, Saudi Arabia was convinced that the problem could only be solved by financing the Fund in the same way as safeguards, in other words, through fixed and assured appropriations to the Regular Budget. He urged the Conference to give serious consideration to that option. The developing countries had pinned their hopes on the Agency as a body engaged in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, especially as advances in science and technology increased the number and variety of its applications. The technical co-operation programme was an appropriate means of fulfilling those hopes. Saudi Arabia therefore supported the measures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the programme and trusted that the Conference would take steps to guarantee the requisite resources as soon as possible.

89. The General Conference had repeatedly addressed the issue of the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, but had unfortunately been unable to make any tangible progress. Saudi Arabia's position was based on a number of fundamental principles: expansion of the Board's membership to reflect recent developments and international realities as well as the circumstances of the regional groups; distribution of the seats in accordance with the size and role of the various regional groups; and giving all Member States the right to belong to a regional group following consultations with the members of the group concerned and without imposing any State on a group.

90. The Agency was carrying out valuable work in the areas of safety and security, which helped to build public confidence in nuclear energy. Aspects covered included preparations for the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the safe transport of radioactive materials, radioactive waste and spent fuel within and across national boundaries, and regional and international co-ordination of activities aimed at preventing illicit trafficking in radioactive materials, including training courses and exchanges of data. Saudi Arabia looked forward to more widespread implementation of the Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Materials adopted at the Denver Summit of the Group of Eight.

91. The Conference documents and statements by previous speakers indicated a desire to expand the verification component of the Agency's work. While he understood the arguments of those who advocated such a policy, he found it difficult to support them fully at a time when the Agency was having trouble financing its development function.

92. The Agency had been working for many years to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system with a view to detecting undeclared nuclear activities. Its most recent achievement had been the approval by the Board of the Model Additional Protocol on 15 May 1997. Saudi Arabia had supported the initiatives concerned and called for their implementation provided that the costs incurred were not at the expense of technical assistance and co-operation or the transfer of nuclear technology and its use for peaceful purposes.

93. Saudi Arabia encouraged all States to accede to the NPT and to conclude safeguards agreements with the Agency with a view to building mutual confidence and strengthening international security. However, the Agency's credibility and indeed the whole safeguards system would be undermined if it abandoned the principle of universality and yielded to attempts to exempt certain States.

94. With regard to the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, the existence in the region of nuclear activities that were not intended for peaceful purposes was common knowledge. Moreover, the originator of those activities had not acceded to the NPT and refused to conclude a safeguards agreement with the Agency, thus impeding progress towards peace and stability in the region. Mutual confidence was not built on words alone but on corresponding action. There was a long way to go before a zone free of weapons of mass destruction could be established in the Middle East, but he trusted that the parties concerned would remain steadfast and that their perseverance would ultimately bear fruit. Saudi Arabia felt that the Agency could play a more active role in that connection than hitherto.

95. Mr. BENAVIDES (European Commission) expressed full support for the views expressed on behalf of the European Union, particularly with regard to the threat posed by the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan and the strong message conveyed to those countries. He also supported the important steps taken towards the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

96. Countries which were candidates for European Union membership were currently involved in a comprehensive screening process that would enable them to identify the areas where their national legislation needed to be brought into line with the European Union's legal framework. The energy sector had its place in those negotiations, and the candidate States with nuclear power plants - the overwhelming majority of which were of basic Russian design - would be making firm commitments regarding nuclear safety and continuing with their efforts to bring their legislation in the areas of radiation protection, safety and radioactive waste management into line with that of the European Union.

97. In the past year, there had been two very significant developments in energy policy: the Kyoto agreement of December 1997 on greenhouse gas emission reductions and the European Union gas directive of May 1998 in which the European gas market would progressively be opened up to greater competition. In achieving the Kyoto commitments, nuclear energy would clearly continue to play a very important role and complement policy initiatives in other areas such as energy efficiency and the renewable energies. The European Union's Energy Framework Programme would bring all energy activities with a financial implication at European Union level within a single framework in order to improve their transparency and effectiveness in contributing to the achievement of European Union energy goals.

98. The New Partnership Approach under which EURATOM and the Agency implemented safeguards in the European Union had continued to operate successfully. The European Commission was pleased to note that just over a year after the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol, the Board of Governors and the Council of Ministers of the European Union had approved the conclusion of additional protocols to the three existing agreements between the 13 non-nuclear-weapon States of EURATOM, EURATOM and the Agency; France, EURATOM and the Agency; and the United Kingdom, EURATOM and the Agency. That had opened the way for signature of the three additional protocols in Vienna on 22 September 1998. That rapid achievement had required the resolution of a number of political, institutional, legal and technical issues in which the Agency's Secretariat had made an invaluable contribution. The European Commission believed that in an integrated safeguards system it would be possible for the Agency to move away from mechanical criteria-driven safeguards in States which implemented fully the strengthening measures and to devolve those responsibilities to a regional system, and it was ready to work with the Agency to identify the best way of achieving that in the European Union.

99. The European Commission and the EURATOM Supply Agency were of the opinion that the uranium and enrichment components of the materials derived from the dismantling of nuclear warheads in the Russian Federation resulting from the agreement with the United States of America had to be introduced in the world market in a stable and predictable manner without jeopardizing the viability of the necessary primary production.

100. Turning to nuclear safety, he said that the European Union contributed to the continued development of a worldwide nuclear safety culture through the nuclear safety research programmes carried out in Member States and at the European Union's Joint Research Centre and through the continued search for consensus within the Union on safety requirements and procedures through the Commission's standing advisory expert group on nuclear safety. The main orientation of the European Union's programmes of assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been to support and accelerate safety enhancement programmes for nuclear power plants. A budget of 80 million ECU had been allocated in 1997 for projects in the nuclear safety field within the TACIS and PHARE assistance programmes. Overall, there had been a contribution of 100 million ECU to the G-7 action plan for Ukraine, which addressed sensitive issues related to the shutting down of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the safety of the Unit 4 shelter and the achievement of an acceptable safety level at the two units under construction at Rovno and Khmel'nitski. The European Union would also be making a contribution of \$100 million to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund.

101. The European Union's Joint Research Centre was carrying out research in a number of important fields. In the case of basic actinide research, which was important for the fuel cycle and waste management, work focused particularly on the electronic structure of those actinide elements and compounds that were attracting increasing interest owing to their peculiar chemical and solid-state properties. In the field of advanced materials, research was directed to the development of innovative processing and testing methods.

102. There had been a number of developments in the area of co-operation between EURATOM and specific countries: the co-operation agreement for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between EURATOM and the Government of Argentina, signed in June 1996, had entered into force in October 1997; an agreement for co-operation in the area of nuclear research between EURATOM and Canada had recently been concluded; negotiations on an agreement between EURATOM and Japan for co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were expected to begin in the near future; and, since September 1997, EURATOM had been a member of the Executive Board of KEDO and had been playing its role in contributing to achieving peace, stability, reconciliation and furtherance of non-proliferation goals on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, the European Commission was implementing, under the TACIS programme, an important collaborative effort with the Russian Federation to support the implementation of the new safeguards approach in that country.

103. Mr. HOBEICA (Lebanon) stressed that, in a rapidly changing world, it was essential for the Agency to keep pace with scientific and technological developments and discharge its constantly growing responsibilities and workload effectively and efficiently. That called, inter alia, for an expansion of the Board of Governors to make it more representative, the use of more advanced verification and monitoring techniques in implementing the safeguards system, and the promotion of modern technology to facilitate energy production while protecting the environment.

104. It was through technical co-operation that the Agency fulfilled one of its most important tasks, namely promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development. For that

purpose, a clear-cut strategy was necessary based on the concept of “Partners in Development”, the aim of which was to enhance the role of nuclear science and technology in achieving sustainable development in Member States. The developing countries urgently needed assistance in consolidating their infrastructure for nuclear safety, radiation protection, waste disposal, environmental protection and management of natural resources. Training was also a key requirement for developing national and regional capabilities, especially practical training that took Member States’ priorities into account.

105. Lebanon was in favour of combining activities financed from extrabudgetary resources with those financed from the Regular Budget or the TCF in order to improve programme management. It had participated in technical co-operation activities during the previous year and in pilot projects in the areas of infrastructure improvement, radiation protection, monitoring of rinderpest in West Asia, nuclear medicine, and the use of isotope hydrology in water resource management. In addition, Lebanon had contributed \$100 000 to a cost-sharing project for the purchase of a Van de Graaff accelerator which would markedly enhance its capability to analyse a number of industrial and environmental materials. Considerable progress had also been made in a project using the sterile insect technique to combat fruit pests.

106. Israel’s possession of undeclared nuclear facilities that were not subject to international supervision posed a constant threat to peace and security in the Middle East. Its aggressive stance was an obstacle to progress in the peace process. Israel also continued to occupy Lebanese territory, oppressing the local civilian population through detention without trial, artillery bombardment, and destruction of homes and crops. The Agency, in its role as defender of the principle of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, should take firm measures to counter the Israeli nuclear threat by calling on Israel to accede to the NPT like all other States in the region and to place its facilities under Agency supervision.

107. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was a matter of urgency and he trusted that the Conference would adopt a strongly worded resolution, urging all parties concerned to take the requisite steps to achieve that aim, first and foremost by acceding to the NPT and concluding a safeguards agreement.

108. Lebanon viewed the amendment of Article VI of the Statute as a necessary step to keep pace with changes in the international political situation and to reflect the growing membership of the Agency through fair representation of Member States in the Board of Governors. Linkage of the expansion of the Board with Israel’s incorporation in the MESA Group was a move designed to obstruct the expansion process. The inclusion of any State in a regional group depended on its acceptance by the group concerned. Israel, which persistently refused to sit at the negotiating table with its neighbours, could not impose its presence on a particular geographical group.

109. The Agency’s safeguards system had been continuously evolving for the past 30 years. The adoption by the Board of the Model Additional Protocol laid the requisite legal basis for enhancing the Agency’s ability to detect undeclared nuclear materials and activities. He was pleased to note that 221 safeguards agreements had been concluded with 137 States as

of 31 December 1997. However, the safeguards system would never be comprehensive until it covered all States. So long as there remained one State in the Middle East that had not concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency or opened its nuclear facilities to inspection, a threat would continue to hang over the entire region. The Conference should therefore call on Israel yet again to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency supervision.

110. The recent nuclear tests had stirred up fears of a return to the arms race and had turned the Agency, for the time being, into one of the most important international organizations. Great hopes were pinned on it as mankind sought to avert the danger posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. A concerted effort on the part of the Agency's Member States was needed to implement its principles and make its safeguards universal so that one day the world would finally be rid of all weapons of mass destruction.

111. Mr. de OURO-PRETO (Brazil), after welcoming Benin to the Agency, said that the nuclear tests carried out in South Asia earlier that year had dealt a serious blow to the non-proliferation regime. The international community had expressed deep regret about those tests and had urged the countries concerned to sign the CTBT without conditions and to accede to the NPT. In an international environment where economic crisis was prevalent, the task of reinforcing world security through non-proliferation and disarmament had acquired renewed urgency. Brazil did not believe that nuclear weapons helped enhance the security of any nation. The Brazilian President had recently stated that economic competitiveness, social cohesion and well-founded democratic institutions were what was needed for a country to play a positive and influential international role. Brazil's own recent ratification of the CTBT and its accession to the NPT reinforced its commitment to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime as well as its credentials as a reliable partner in the struggle for a world with more peace and security, social progress and economic development.

112. Effective measures to prevent nuclear proliferation and bring about complete disarmament would go a long way to enhancing world security. That was the main message of the declaration subscribed to by Brazil and seven other countries entitled "Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: The Need for a New Agenda", issued in June 1998. It was his country's firm belief that the number of nuclear Powers should not increase. Brazil welcomed the progress made under the START agreements between the United States and Russia on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms and the unilateral reductions made by other nuclear-weapon States. Although all augured well for the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, it seemed improbable that the world would be free of nuclear weapons in the near future.

113. With regard to safeguards, the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol represented a significant step forward in strengthening the Agency's verification system. During the five years in which it had been in operation, ABACC's technical capability had been gradually improving and ABACC had helped to improve confidence in the international safeguards system. The Co-operation Agreement between the Agency and ABACC, concluded in May 1998, would do much to improve the co-ordination of activities between the two organizations and would result in more efficiency and effectiveness in the application of safeguards in Brazil and Argentina.

114. For Brazil, 1998 had brought further outstanding developments in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including progress on the Angra-2 nuclear power plant, which was expected to start generating electricity in 1999, the implementation of the nuclear fuel cycle on an industrial scale, the production of 20% enriched uranium, a significant increase in the production of radioisotopes for medical, industrial and scientific purposes and the adoption of a decentralized approach in the Brazilian nuclear sector.

115. In connection with nuclear safety, a number of actions were being taken to reassure the public about the safety of nuclear energy and to meet Brazil's international commitments under the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The number of inspections of nuclear and radiation facilities had been increased and a system had been established for financing radiation protection and nuclear safety.

116. Regarding the social uses of nuclear energy, consistent investment in nuclear medicine over the past few years had resulted in a significant increase in the production of radiopharmaceuticals. The public had benefited and the latest figures indicated that more than 1.5 million patients in Brazil were now being treated with radiopharmaceuticals.

117. In conclusion, he emphasized the major importance of the Agency's dual role in fostering all the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in preventing proliferation to ensure a more developed and safer world for present and future generations.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

