

General Conference

GC(56)/OR.8

Issued: November 2012

General Distribution

Original: English

Fifty-sixth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Eighth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Thursday, 20 September 2012, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr BARROS OREIRO (Uruguay)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹	Paragraphs
– Report on the Scientific Forum 2012	1–3
7 General debate and Annual Report for 2011 (<i>resumed</i>)	4–23
Statements by the delegates of:	
El Salvador	4–9
Palestine	10–18
Monaco	19–21
19 Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East	24–73
20 Israeli nuclear capabilities	74–119

¹ GC(56)/19.

Abbreviations used in this record:

CPF	Country Programme Framework
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
SIT	sterile insect technique
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

– Report on the Scientific Forum 2012

1. The PRESIDENT, recalling that the theme of the Scientific Forum 2012 had been “Food for the Future: Meeting the Challenges with Nuclear Applications”, invited the Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2012, Ms Karen Hulebak, to present the report on it.
2. Ms HULEBAK (Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2012) presented the report, which is reproduced in the Annex.
3. The PRESIDENT thanked Ms Hulebak for her report and commended her and the Secretariat on the success of the Scientific Forum 2012.

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2011 (resumed) (GC(56)/2 and Supplement)

4. Mr RIVERA MORA (El Salvador) said that his country attached great importance to the Agency’s work in the areas of nuclear safety and nuclear applications, particularly in human health, food and agriculture, water resources and the environment, which contributed greatly towards sustainable socio-economic development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The Agency played a vital role in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, mainly through its technical cooperation with developing countries.
5. As El Salvador lacked the financial resources for nuclear power generation, its energy policy was based on promoting alternative energy sources. The master plan for the development of renewable energy in El Salvador, developed with assistance from Japan and presented in May 2012, identified the potential of small hydroelectric power plants, wind power, solar voltaic power, solar thermal power, geothermal power, biomass and biogas, and addressed strategies for their development. Maps showing the areas of the country with the greatest potential for some of those energy sources would be made available to public and private investors, and he encouraged Agency Member States to consider getting involved.
6. His country welcomed the focus of the 2012 Scientific Forum on food security, an issue of vital importance for developing countries in the light of volatile food prices, climate change and meteorological shocks, as well as the closer linkage between energy and agricultural markets owing to the increasing demand for biofuel, which exacerbated food insecurity. El Salvador welcomed research and development on the use of nuclear techniques to increase and diversify food production in a sustainable manner with improved quality, and to combat plant and animal diseases. His country encouraged the Agency and the FAO to expand and diversify their cooperation, including linkages among specialists, experts and policymakers in various areas of sustainable development.
7. With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, his country remained a staunch advocate of general and complete nuclear disarmament as the only way to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. El Salvador supported all initiatives aimed at establishing a broad, transparent, binding, and verifiable multilateral disarmament process, which it believed was possible with the requisite political will. The Agency should play a vital role in that process through its inspection and verification activities to provide

assurances that nuclear energy remained in peaceful uses in all States. An important prerequisite for that process would be the universal application of the NPT.

8. Nuclear-weapon-free zones were another important way to strengthen international peace and security and the conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction to be held in Finland in December 2012 would be an important first step. The success of that conference required a number of conditions to be met. All States of the Middle East must attend and, as an important prerequisite, all must have recognized one another as legal political entities so that agreements adopted at the conference would be legitimate, respected and implemented in good faith on the basis of sovereign equality. There must be an easing of tension in the Middle East and States must adopt confidence building measures, so that discussions could be held on the basis of mutual respect and shared responsibility. All States in the region must also be truly willing to subscribe to relevant international instruments, first and foremost the NPT, and to cooperate fully with Agency safeguards inspection and verification of their facilities so that the Agency could provide assurances that their nuclear programmes were peaceful. States must not use the conference for purposes unrelated to the denuclearization of the Middle East. All United Nations Security Council members, especially permanent members, must lend their full political support to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East that was viable, permanent and sustainable from the start. If the enumerated conditions were not met, fear and anxiety would persist in the region, and the threat to international peace and security would remain.

9. Finally, he announced that his country had just signed its CPF for 2012–2017 with the Agency. He thanked the Board and the Secretariat for their cooperation in that regard, and for the approval of two projects for the 2012–2013 biennium in the areas of food and agriculture and the environment.

10. Mr ELWAZER (Palestine) said that the technical cooperation programme was a central part of the Agency's mandate, supporting national nuclear capacity-building, the transfer of nuclear technology, and cooperation between countries with advanced nuclear programmes and those aspiring to develop peaceful nuclear capabilities. As the range of peaceful nuclear applications for which no alternatives were available continued to expand, so should the scope of technical cooperation.

11. Palestine, like other countries, sought access to peaceful nuclear applications in areas such as medical diagnosis and therapy, agriculture, water resources and scientific research. Unfortunately, it could make no progress in that regard because since 2008 Israel had blocked the import of even the most basic equipment needed to build Palestinian medical and research capacities. The blocked equipment, purchased by the Agency under various national projects, had without exception consisted of basic items used to detect radiological contamination in food and the environment or for medical purposes. It had all been approved and shipped by the Agency in accordance with Palestine's modest technical capabilities and included equipment for the detection of contamination in milk and food for children, a form of assistance protected by international instruments.

12. Israel also obstructed Palestine's cooperation with other international organizations, such as UNIDO. Israel's actions were clearly politically motivated and designed to prevent Palestinian progress and development. It also entailed for the organizations in Vienna reloading and warehousing costs that greatly exceeded the value of the equipment.

13. In 2012 the Secretariat had approved a number of national capacity-building projects, including establishment and development of a quality assurance system in nuclear medicine, development of Palestine's capacity to produce plant mutants to increase wheat and barley yields, support for the establishment of a national radiation dosimetry laboratory at Jerusalem University, and use of nuclear technology for groundwater assessment in north-eastern Palestine. Those projects were doomed to

failure if Israel persisted with its policy of obstructing imports. Palestine urged the Agency to take speedy and effective action to compel Israel to facilitate the import of all the equipment in question.

14. Palestine attached great importance to the development of its human resources and had therefore participated in recent years in training programmes in medical physics, radiation protection and nuclear medicine arranged by the Agency through universities in Syria, Jordan and Hungary.

15. Palestine welcomed the outcome of the Agency meeting of national coordinators concerning projects for the period 2014–2015, which had been attended by Palestinian experts, and thanked the Secretariat for its support for the projects aimed at building Palestine's infrastructure.

16. Palestinians, living in a region surrounded by countries possessing advanced nuclear technology, both peaceful and non-peaceful, had a right to live in peace, safe from radiological contamination and secure from the threat of nuclear weapons. Palestine therefore strongly supported the Agency's role in the area of safeguards, verification and nuclear security. His delegation was deeply concerned about Israel's expanding nuclear capabilities and its persistent refusal to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear installations under Agency comprehensive safeguards. That widely shared concern was all the greater in the light of reports of the deteriorating structural condition of a number of those installations and the lack of protective facilities or expert advice for Palestine's national institutions that would enable them to deal with a nuclear accident.

17. For those reasons, it was incumbent on all States, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, to promote the universality of the NPT and to take speedy action to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Palestine supported all serious efforts to convene and ensure the success of the 2012 conference on that topic.

18. The Palestinian people had long yearned for a just, comprehensive and enduring peace in the region. In a démarche that was not intended, as some parties alleged, to isolate Israel, Palestine had decided to propose, within a few days, that the United Nations General Assembly adopt a resolution admitting Palestine to the United Nations as a non-member observer State. Such a step would increase opportunities for peace and security in the region and enhance the Palestinians' ability to remain steadfast in their opposition to the occupation.

19. Mr LABARRÈRE (Monaco) said that, while his country fully supported all the Agency's efforts to increase nuclear safety and security, it was in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy that it wished to make its contribution.

20. Monaco was a steady supporter of PACT and had in the preceding year signed an agreement with Mongolia on the development of palliative care for cancer patients in that country. His Government, and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, were also keenly interested in the issue of access to potable water and the Agency's projects in that area.

21. Monaco was particularly concerned about ocean acidification, which caused erosion, endangered the stability of coastal zones, and threatened the livelihood of billions of persons worldwide. Its socio-economic impact, exacerbated by extreme climatic phenomena, was potentially devastating. To assist international efforts to mitigate that problem his country had recently supported the establishment of an ocean acidification international coordination centre at the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco. That project was one of the outcomes of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro and was also within the framework of the Peaceful Uses Initiative.

22. Mr ZHUYKOV (Russian Federation), recalling the comments made by his country's delegate earlier in the session, said that his country fully supported the Agency's activities and the development of the safeguards system. However, safeguards must be applied impartially and on a

non-discriminatory basis using objective methods of verification and analysis. Significant modifications to the safeguards system must take into account the opinions of Member States and be approved by the Board of Governors. While not wishing to stand in the way of the General Conference's approval of the draft Annual Report for 2011, Russia remained concerned, and wished to place on record its reservations, about certain language in it aimed at introducing into Agency practice modified concepts for a State-level safeguards approach. In his country's view, the Annual Report for 2011 was not the appropriate mechanism for approving a new safeguards approach developed within the Secretariat and not approved by the Board.

23. Mr CURIA (Argentina) said that insufficient detail had been provided regarding practices and standards in connection with a State-level concept for safeguards.

19. Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(56)/17; GC(55)/L.1, GC(55)/L.2)

24. The PRESIDENT said that item 19 had been included in the Conference's agenda pursuant to resolution GC(55)/RES/14. The Director General had submitted the report contained in document GC(56)/17 pursuant to paragraph 13 of that resolution. The matter had been considered by the Board, the preceding week, on the basis of that report. Document GC(56)/L.1 contained a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation and document GC(56)/L.2 contained a draft resolution submitted by Egypt.

25. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution contained in document GC(56)/L.2, said that it should be considered in the context of the Agency's efforts to promote the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear facilities and activities in the Middle East, which would contribute greatly to regional and international peace and security. It was also to be seen in the context of the international community's responsibility and desire to preserve the Agency's essential role in efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and prevent proliferation in the region.

26. The General Conference's adoption of the resolutions on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East submitted by Egypt at past sessions eloquently testified to that reality. The text of the current draft resolution was identical to that of the resolution adopted by the General Conference at its fifty-fifth session, apart from the necessary technical updates. Egypt looked forward to adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

27. Mr ULIYANOV (Russian Federation), introducing the draft resolution contained in GC(56)/L.1, said that, as one of the conveners of the conference to be held in Helsinki on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, his country considered it very great important that the conference be held on schedule, i.e. before the end of 2012, and that it be a success. Preparations for the conference were moving ahead, but progress was slow owing to two major problems. First, two Middle East States had yet to confirm their participation, and second, it was unclear what the tenor and possible outcomes of the conference would be. Russia had therefore thought it useful to try to use the current session of the General Conference as a forum to give a positive impetus to the work to come.

28. The main thrust of the draft resolution was that all States in the Middle East should attend the conference and participate in a constructive and mutually respectful manner. Extensive consultations with Member States showed that, while the draft resolution had broad support, some had doubts about certain provisions. Since adoption by consensus would have been essential for the sake of the Helsinki

conference, Russia had decided to withdraw the draft resolution rather than place any members in the difficult position of having to vote. The draft resolution had already largely served its purpose of drawing attention to the urgent need to resolve the issues hampering preparations for the conference. He thanked those States that had been willing to support the draft resolution and called on the two States in the Middle East that had not confirmed their participation in the conference to do so without further delay.

29. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, reiterated the group's principled position that stability could not be achieved in the Middle East as long as a massive imbalance in military capabilities, owing particularly to the possession of nuclear weapons, allowed one party to threaten others in the region.

30. NAM continued to support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as a positive step towards achieving the objective of global nuclear disarmament.

31. Convinced that the effective and efficient application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East promoted greater confidence among States in the region, NAM viewed their universal application there as a practical and necessary step towards that end and towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

32. NAM welcomed the conclusion, by NAM member States party to the NPT, of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency pursuant to Article III.1 of the Treaty, as non-nuclear-weapon States. All States in the Middle East except Israel were parties to the NPT and had accepted Agency comprehensive safeguards. NAM regretted Israel's continued insistence that that issue could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process. NAM stressed that there was no reason to make the application of comprehensive safeguards at all nuclear facilities in the Middle East contingent on the prior achievement of a peace settlement, and that, on the contrary, the former would contribute to the latter.

33. NAM regretted that the Director General had made no further progress in his efforts, pursuant to resolution GC(55)/RES/14, as regards the application of Agency comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. The situation was unacceptable, and all Member States should cooperate in rectifying it. In the promotion of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, first priority should be accorded to achieving universal application of Agency comprehensive safeguards.

34. NAM welcomed the Director General's efforts to encourage the development and consideration of relevant new ideas and approaches that could help to move his mandates forward regarding the early application of Agency comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East, and requested that he brief the Member States regularly on those efforts.

35. The NAM member States party to the NPT recalled the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and the endorsement by the 2010 NPT Review Conference of the convening, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, of a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States. NAM noted that the 2012 conference would take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution.

36. NAM appreciated the Director General's convening of the forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which had been held in Vienna 21–22 November 2011, and noted that the forum had reflected consensus within the

international community on the importance of establishing such a zone. Accordingly, NAM requested that the Director General continue his efforts and consultations with all Member States to that end.

37. NAM was fully committed to cooperating with and supporting the Director General in his efforts to implement resolution GC(55)/RES/14 and expected all Member States of the Agency would do the same.

38. NAM supported adoption of the draft resolution contained in document GC(56)/L.2.

39. Ms AL-NADAWI (Iraq) said that in her country's view, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones contributed to nuclear disarmament, strengthened international peace and security, bolstered international confidence and strengthened non-proliferation. They also served to support the goals of disarmament and arms control in general. Given the importance of the Middle East region, the establishment there of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, was a pressing concern for the international community and, given the requisite good faith and political will, was an attainable goal.

40. As a first step in preparing for the establishment of such a zone, Israel, as the only country in the region not to have done so, must accede to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. In that connection, Iraq called for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 487 (1981) and 687 (1991). It was essential that General Conference resolutions be based on the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences concerning the Middle East.

41. It was important that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction be held before the end of 2012. Failure of all States in the region without exception to participate would spell failure for international efforts to establish the zone, with grave consequences for the region. Iraq hoped that the conference would be well prepared and would produce clear and positive results.

42. Mr HUANG Wei (China) said that all States in the Middle East should accede to the NPT and implement Agency safeguards agreements, and called on Israel to do so. China supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. He thanked the Government of Finland for its efforts in organizing the conference on the establishment of such a zone and urged all States to work constructively so that the conference could be held in 2012 as scheduled.

43. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that nearly four decades had elapsed since the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East had first been put forward by Iran. Since 1980, the fact that the United Nations General Assembly had adopted numerous resolutions on that issue by consensus demonstrated global support for the establishment of such a zone.

44. By placing its peaceful nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards Iran had demonstrated its commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran had stated at the 16th NAM Summit in August 2012 that nuclear weapons neither ensured security, nor consolidated political power; rather they were a threat to both security and political power. He had gone on to say that Iran considered the use of nuclear, chemical and similar weapons as a great and unforgivable sin. His country had proposed the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and was committed to it. He had stressed that Iran had never sought to acquire nuclear weapons and that it would never give up its right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Those statements by its Supreme Leader underscored Iran's undiminished support for the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East, with the ultimate objective of a world free from nuclear weapons.

45. It was regrettable that international efforts over decades to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East had made no progress owing to the Zionist regime's intransigent policy of non-adherence to the NPT and, more importantly, its refusal to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. What was worse, that regime's irresponsible behaviour cast serious doubt on the possibility of one being established in the near future.

46. As noted in the Director General's report (GC(56)/17), Israel was the only non-party to the NPT in the region and the only one without a safeguards agreement with the Agency. Despite repeated calls by the international community in numerous forums, that regime, confident of the political and military backing of its staunch allies, had not even declared its intention to accede to the NPT. Its illegal, clandestine nuclear activities, supported by the United States and the European Union, constituted a serious threat to regional peace and security and to the global non-proliferation regime.

47. Unfortunately, decades of imposed inaction by the United Nations Security Council vis-à-vis the Zionist regime's well documented nuclear weapons programme had resulted in that regime's having the audacity to acknowledge explicitly its possession of nuclear weapons. Its clandestine development of nuclear weapons not only violated basic principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the NPT and numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, it also showed defiant disregard for the concerns and repeated appeals of the overwhelming majority of United Nations member States and for Israel to renounce nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT. The Security Council should have taken prompt and appropriate action to address the clear and serious threat posed by Israel, instead of issuing resolutions against States party to the NPT. The Israeli regime was the only obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Peace and stability in the region were unattainable while its nuclear arsenal continued to threaten the region and the rest of the world.

48. Iran was a State party to the NPT and had ratified all the major treaties on WMD. It was fully committed to its international undertakings and saw the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In its view, universal adherence to the NPT, particularly in the Middle East, would effectively ensure the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Pending the realization of such a zone, countries in the region should not acquire nuclear weapons, should not permit the stationing of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices within its territory or under its jurisdiction or control, and should refrain from actions that ran counter to the letter and spirit of the NPT and of international resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

49. Iran firmly believed that an agreed plan of action and a timetable for achieving universality of the NPT, especially in the Middle East, should be a top priority on the agenda of all States party to the NPT, especially the nuclear-weapon States. The Israeli regime had repeatedly delayed its accession to the NPT by making it contingent on the prior establishment of a comprehensive and durable peace in the region, thereby creating a vicious circle, since that regime itself was the chief obstacle to that peace. Concerted pressure should therefore be brought to bear on the Israeli regime to take the actions required of it so that the long-sought goal of peace and security in the Middle East could be realised.

50. Failure to address the root cause of the problem in the Middle East for decades had resulted in deadlock. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in August 2012, had proposed a just, democratic and realistic solution for establishing peace in the region; namely, that all Palestinians, whether they were citizens of Palestine or Palestinians in exile, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, should return to their country and take part in a carefully supervised referendum on its political system and then help draft a constitution.

51. Mr DANIELI (Israel) said that four out of five cases of gross violation of safeguards and NPT obligations had involved Member States in the Middle East which were party to the NPT (Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran) and that the repeated introduction of an agenda item on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East would be pointless until Iran and Syria were addressed. Moreover, the decision by the sponsor of GC(56)/L.2 to abstain in the vote on the Board of Governor's resolution on Iran the preceding week (GOV/2012/50) suggested that neither regional security nor the sponsor's own draft resolution's call to fulfil in good faith international obligations and commitments relating to safeguards were uppermost in the sponsor's mind.

52. During the vote at the 55th session of the General Conference on the draft resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(55)/L.1), Israel had abstained. His country, among others, did not associate itself with the call on all States of the Middle East region to accede to the NPT. While Israel recognized the importance of the non-proliferation regime and shared its goals, experience had shown that the NPT did not provide a solution to the unique security challenges of the Middle East. Any call for universal adherence to the NPT must be judged against an assessment of the sombre realities and of the Treaty's applicability in a region where it had been violated. Accession to the NPT could therefore not be a goal in itself. Nor had that issue ever been a stumbling block in Israel's bilateral relations with neighbouring countries with which it had signed peace accords.

53. The preamble of the NPT made it clear that the Treaty was designed for a political environment in which States refrained from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and shared the objective of peace and security. Unlike other regions, the Middle East had, regrettably, made little progress towards that goal. Threats to annihilate States were still common, and forces dedicated to promoting violence and sowing instability still prevailed.

54. Israel had always maintained a responsible policy in the nuclear domain. Its position regarding regional security in all its aspects, including the establishment of the greater Middle East region as an effectively verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, had been amply elaborated. A comprehensive and durable peace in the region, along with full compliance by all States of the region with their non-proliferation obligations, were prerequisites for the establishment of such a zone.

55. The historical experience of other regions demonstrated that a regional security framework could only arise out of the collective political desire of the parties themselves to build mutual confidence in their commitment to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. The concern felt by the international community could not substitute for that desire which must emanate collectively from the region itself.

56. In the midst of turmoil, particularly in Syria, where the regime's fight for survival had claimed tens of thousands of innocent civilian lives, a new Middle East was evolving, with profound changes taking place in many States. Positive outcomes of the democratization process might offer an opportunity for a better atmosphere, one conducive to stability and the building of confidence. Israel welcomed the positive developments in the region, but it could not ignore those forces that sought to sustain despotic regimes and those voices that questioned the wisdom of peace accords among States in the region.

57. His delegation regretted the decision, taken some years previously, by the sponsor of the resolution to leave the path of consensus so as to avoid any dialogue with Israel. He requested separate votes on operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution in document GC(56)/L.2 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

58. The PRESIDENT noted that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution contained in document GC(56)/L.2.

59. At the request of Mr Shamaa (Egypt), a roll-call vote was taken.

60. South Africa, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

61. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Canada, Ghana, India, Lesotho, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

62. There were 110 votes in favour and 1 against, with 8 abstentions. Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was adopted.

63. Mr SWAMINATHAN (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had abstained because it believed that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution introduced matters extraneous to the Agency.

64. The PRESIDENT noted that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on the whole of the draft resolution contained in document GC(56)/L.2.

65. At the request of Mr Shamaa (Egypt), a roll-call vote was taken.

66. Lesotho, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

67. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Israel, Lesotho, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

68. There were 111 votes in favour and none against, with 8 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

69. Mr WOOD (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, expressed regret that, despite the calls to return to a consensus-based approach to safeguards issues in the Middle East, the draft resolution had been tabled without prior consultation with key States in the region. Progress on those issues could only be made through sincere dialogue and engagement between States in the region, and they must themselves build the confidence and trust necessary to that end. The draft resolution reflected the continuing common effort towards the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery. That goal was achievable, but it would not be achieved quickly and would not be achieved in the absence of progress towards a comprehensive peace in the region. Establishing confidence and a constructive atmosphere were critical in that regard, and a return to a consensus-based approach on Middle East issues at the General Conference would have been a key step towards that end. The United States regretted that yet another opportunity for confidence-building had been missed.

70. Mr BARRETT (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that Canada had abstained because it was unable to support a resolution on safeguards in the Middle East which failed to address the serious nuclear non-compliance of Iran and Syria and which confused sovereign national decisions, such as accession to the NPT, with legal obligations stemming from Agency membership and safeguards agreements.

71. Canada's support for a verifiable nuclear-weapon-free-zone in the Middle East had been clear and consistent. Noting that draft resolutions tabled in prior years had enjoyed broad support, Canada was disappointed that at recent General Conference sessions language had been introduced which had caused the consensus to collapse. Member States should adopt a more technical perspective when considering safeguards issues in the Middle East.

72. Mr PAPADEMAS (Cyprus), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union and Croatia, said that the EU remained fully committed to universalization of the NPT. While the EU had supported the resolution, it would have preferred that it call on all States party to the NPT to ensure compliance with the Treaty. The EU would continue to urge all States in the Middle East to implement comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. In its view, the resolution would have been stronger if it had included a call for the implementation of such protocols.

73. The European Union welcomed the consensus reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference concerning an action plan and a procedure for implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the holding of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the

Middle East. That consensus had demonstrated the common resolve to not only uphold but also strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

20. Israeli Nuclear Capabilities

(GC(56)/1/Add.1 and Corr.1; GC(56)/13)

74. The PRESIDENT said that item 20 had been included in the agenda pursuant to a request made by the Arab States that were members of the Agency. He drew attention to an explanatory memorandum contained in document GC(56)/1/Add.1 and GC(56)/1/Add.1/Corr.1 and to document GC(56)/13.

75. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that NAM strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region as long as enormous imbalances in military capabilities, owing particularly to the possession of nuclear weapons, allowed one party to threaten its neighbours and the region. NAM welcomed the conclusion, by its Member States party to the NPT, of comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency in fulfilment of their obligation under Article III.1 of the Treaty, as non-nuclear-weapon States. NAM noted that all States of the Middle East except Israel were parties to the NPT and had undertaken to accept Agency comprehensive safeguards. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. NAM reiterated its support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

76. NAM noted with concern that a selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East undermined the viability of the Agency's safeguards regime. That approach had also resulted in the continued and dangerous presence of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, despite the repeated calls for Israel to subject those facilities and activities to Agency comprehensive safeguards. NAM was deeply concerned about the consequences for international security of the acquisition of a nuclear capability by Israel, which posed a serious and continuing threat to the security of its neighbours and other States, and of the ongoing access which Israeli scientists were provided to the nuclear facilities of one nuclear-weapon State. All Member States should cooperate to rectify that unacceptable situation. NAM called on all Member States to participate actively in achieving the universality of Agency comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East. Implementing resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities would be a first step towards that goal.

77. NAM regretted Israel's continued insistence that Agency safeguards could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process. NAM emphasized that the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East was not contingent on or linked to the prior conclusion of a peace settlement. In fact, the former would contribute to the latter.

78. NAM reiterated its call to completely prohibit the transfer to Israel of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices, as well as assistance to Israel in nuclear-related scientific and technological fields.

79. In that regard, NAM noted that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, in his letter to the Director General (reproduced in Annex 2 of the Director General's report contained in document GC(54)/14), had stated that Israel valued the non-proliferation regime, acknowledged its importance, and had over the years demonstrated a responsible policy of restraint in

the nuclear domain. Regrettably, the Agency's official records were testimony to the contrary. In that context, NAM recalled the various General Conference resolutions adopted prior to 1994 regarding South Africa's nuclear capabilities, which had referenced various United Nations General Assembly resolutions on relations between Israel and South Africa and on military and nuclear collaboration with South Africa. The General Assembly resolutions had, inter-alia, strongly condemned the extensive collaboration between Israel and the then racist regime of South Africa, especially in military and nuclear fields, in defiance of General Assembly and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

80. Mr KOUBAA (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that the Group's members had unanimously adopted a common position in support of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and had all, without exception, acceded to the NPT. They had also launched the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East at a time when Israel alone persisted in its refusal to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards. As a result of Israel's obstinacy, peace and security were ever more elusive and mounting tensions were threatening to escalate into a devastating regional arms race.

81. The Arab States had raised the issue at the General Conference over the years, highlighting the perils of the situation. Its aim had been to promote a workable solution through a comprehensive approach which would take into account the security of all the people of the Middle East, instead of individual arrangements marred by bias, selectivity and double standards.

82. He recalled that resolution GC(53)/RES/17, similar resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, and decisions by successive NPT Review Conferences, including those in 1995 and 2010, had all requested that Israel accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards, as a necessary step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

83. Impartial reports confirmed that Israel in fact possessed a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. The Arab States and the international community as a whole must face that fact. Israel should not be allowed to build up its military capabilities unchecked due to the lack of any meaningful international pressure. The Arab Group rejected the tactics used by some States which, to deflect attention away from Israel's nuclear capabilities, prevented the adoption of any resolution specifically naming Israel, while at the same time making arbitrary accusations against other States.

84. Past requests by the Arab Group to include an item on Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference had routinely been opposed on the grounds that the Agency's technical nature precluded its involvement in political issues. In fact, however, the General Conference had often debated the item in question at earlier sessions and at its 53rd session had adopted a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities which had been confined to technical aspects central to the Agency's work, including in relation to the implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements under the NPT.

85. The Arab States were not singling out Israel; Israel had singled itself out among States in the region by insisting on remaining outside the NPT and by not placing its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards. The vote on GC(53)/RES/17 had made it very clear that the international community was aware of the danger posed by the absence of any international control over Israeli nuclear facilities and activities.

86. It was regrettable that some influential Member States, including some nuclear-weapon States, publicly supported the principle of the universality of the NPT, while turning a blind eye to Israel, thereby hindering implementation of the resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities and confirming that double standards were being applied. The Arab Group considered Israeli nuclear capabilities to be no

less important than any other General Conference agenda item, since it bore a direct relationship to peace and security in the Middle East.

87. Israel's obstinate refusal to cooperate with the Agency in the implementation of GC(53)/RES/17 and all other relevant international resolutions had been demonstrated by Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in his letter to the Director General dated 26 July 2010 (reproduced in Annex 2 of GC(54)/14); by the representative of Israel who had said, following the adoption of GC(53)/RES/17, that Israel would not cooperate with that resolution in any way, and by Prime Minister Netanyahu who, after the conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, had rejected all its decisions relating to the Middle East and declared that he would not cooperate in their implementation.

88. In the view of the Arab Group, Israel's implementation of GC(53)/RES/17 and all relevant international resolutions would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

89. The Arab Group had actively contributed to the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and welcomed the convening in 2012 of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In its view, there was still a lack of clarity surrounding efforts to establish such a zone and the Group called for serious and prompt efforts towards that end. The efforts made to date were disappointing and not on a par with the good will displayed by the Arab States in refraining from submitting their draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities during the 55th session of the General Conference. In that same spirit, and with a view to supporting ongoing international efforts towards the successful convening of the conference to be held in Helsinki in December 2012, the Arab States had once again decided to refrain from submitting a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities at the current General Conference session.

90. The Arab Group expressed its appreciation to all States and groups which had stood behind it in support of universalization of the NPT and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, including NAM, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the African Group, the Asian Group and groups and States in Latin America and Europe and elsewhere.

91. Mr QUEISI (Jordan) said that his country considered the safeguards system an essential part of international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and restrict the use of nuclear energy to peaceful applications which benefitted all mankind.

92. Jordan was convinced that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction posed a real threat to world peace and security, especially in the Middle East, where resolutions aimed at ridding the region of nuclear weapons were still not being implemented. In that regard, Jordan reaffirmed the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards in order to realize the universality of the Treaty and pave the way for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. That would contribute to peace and security, reduce tension and mistrust, and allow countries in the region to concentrate on socio-economic development, rather than an arms race.

93. Regarding the report of the General Committee on delegates' credentials (GC(56)/23), he reaffirmed that Jordan's acceptance of the Israeli delegate's credentials in no way constituted recognition of the borders of the territories which had been occupied since 1967, especially Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Jordan continued to consider that Israel's borders did not go beyond the borders of 4 June 1967, as set down in the peace agreements with Jordan and Egypt.

94. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) said that even though the General Conference in 2009 had adopted resolution GC(53)/RES/17 urging Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards, and that previous to that, in particular during the 1980s and 1990s, the

General Conference had adopted various resolutions which were similar but firmer in tone, each year the issue arose as to whether or not to table a resolution.

95. He questioned the legal basis on which it had been decided that the resolution's validity was limited to one year, particularly when no amendment to the text had been adopted by the General Conference, and asked the Secretariat to provide clarification on that issue.

96. In any case, his country was of the view that resolution GC(53)/RES/17 continued in force, Israel should respect it, and the international community should exert constant pressure on Israel to do so. He requested that the Director General report regularly in that regard.

97. Israel's nuclear capabilities remained an issue whether or not a resolution was adopted at the current session of the General Conference. The issue was becoming increasingly important in the light of the general tension in the Middle East and increasing threats posed by Israel and their potentially devastating effects. Concerns were increasing as Israel continued to elude international controls. There was reason to fear that the international community would be lulled into inactivity by misleading information circulated by Israel, which contrasted with the willingness of the Arab countries to provide unlimited cooperation on the issue. Evidence of that could be seen, inter alia, in the fact that in 2011 and 2012 the Arab countries had not presented a resolution on the matter. That gesture, however, had received no recognition by the countries involved and had been completely misinterpreted by Israel, as evidenced by the remarks made by its delegate the previous day at the General Conference. Israel continued to make its participation in the planned 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East conditional on Arab positions, but Lebanon would not give in to political blackmail. The objectives of Lebanon and the other Arab countries were transparent and genuine. Israel and the other countries involved should direct their efforts towards achieving peace and security for the sake of future generations. The November 2011 forum in Vienna on the possibility of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East had reaffirmed that the creation of such a zone would require that all countries first accede to the NPT and place all their nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards. That request, which had been made so often, neither contradicted the Agency's objectives nor politicized or subverted its role, despite what Israel and many other Member States maintained.

98. Contrary to the view, expressed by Israel and others, that nuclear weapons provided security, the preceding decades had clearly shown that an arms race and nuclear weapons only destabilized the region. It was ironic how often Israel stressed the importance of good conduct and respect for international instruments and undertakings, while Israel itself ignored the calls of other countries for it to accede to certain treaties. In Lebanon's view, the only reliable and legitimate way for a country to ensure its security was through compliance with national and international legal requirements.

99. What sense did it make to discuss the possibility of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East when the most recent visit, the only one ever, by outsiders to a nuclear site in Israel had taken place in 1968? The concerns aroused by the declaration made during that visit of the existence of an Israeli nuclear weapon, and by the imposed silence that followed, continued to be felt decades later.

100. It was Lebanon's belief that, even against the background of Israel's growing nuclear arsenal and all the war and conflicts the region had seen, with sincere intentions and clearly defined objectives nothing was impossible. His country saw the 2012 conference as an opportunity to move forward and hoped it would not be wasted.

101. Mr WOOD (United States of America) regretted that the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities had once again been brought before the General Conference, given that Israel, unlike several other Member States in the region, had broken no agreements under the purview of the Agency. The United States was firmly committed to the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction but it

did not believe that using the Agency's meetings to single out Israel for censure would help progress towards that goal. In fact, it was a step in the opposite direction. Repeatedly invoking the issue only served to reduce trust and confidence amongst States in the region and to distract the Agency's attention from the serious issues of ongoing non-compliance by two other States in the region.

102. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba) said that Cuba attached great importance to the agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities, as the issue had serious implications for regional and international peace and security. Cuba could not accept the argument of some States that the issue went beyond the Agency's mandate. The Agency's consideration of the matter was necessary and appropriate because Israel, in its conduct, had violated the spirit of the Agency's Statute. Cuba remained concerned that Israel was still the only country in the Middle East which had not acceded to the NPT and had not expressed the intention to do so. Cuba again called on Israel to accede to the NPT without delay and place its nuclear installations under Agency comprehensive safeguards. That was a legitimate demand of the people of the region, supported by numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and NPT Review Conferences. Israel's non-accession to the NPT constituted the main obstacle to creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. For the sake of the countries of the Middle East and the region's stability it was essential that assistance to Israel in the fields of nuclear-related science and technology, as well as all transfer of nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices, cease immediately until Israel placed its installations under Agency safeguards.

103. To make the Middle East a place of peace and security for all required genuine political will and the elimination of double standards in dealing with the issue. Cuba rejected the double standards of the United States and other countries which accused some States in the Middle East of non-compliance with their safeguards agreements, while continuing to provide nuclear-related assistance to Israel and trying by all possible means to block resolutions which would call upon Israel to accede to the NPT. Instead, the United States and its allies should adopt a coherent and consistent position, abandon their complicity with Israel, and demand the elimination, under international control, of Israel's nuclear weapons.

104. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that since 1982, the Agency had adopted a number of resolutions and decisions calling upon the Israeli regime to promptly accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards. Regrettably, the legitimate concerns of the international community had been ignored owing to objections raised by the allies of the irresponsible Israeli regime which were prepared to support it at any price. That clearly not only jeopardized regional and global security, but also undermined the Agency's verification mechanism.

105. It was urgent for all States in the Middle East to immediately accept the application of Agency comprehensive safeguards, as reaffirmed by the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

106. Until there was an end to the exemption of the Israeli regime from the application of international rules and until it heeded the international community's calls to accede to the NPT, place its nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards and cease to enhance its nuclear capabilities with aid of certain States in flagrant contravention of international law, the spectre of insecurity and instability would continue to haunt the Middle East.

107. Israel's nuclear capabilities had always been a source of concern for the international community. The final document of the 16th NAM summit in Tehran in August 2012 had expressed the international community's long-standing concern over the acquisition of a nuclear weapon capability by Israel which posed a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and had condemned Israel's continuing development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

108. Iran was deeply concerned that continued access by Israeli scientists to the nuclear facilities of some nuclear-weapon States, together with the continued assassination of nuclear scientists of States party to the NPT, would have grave consequences for security in the Middle East and for the global non-proliferation regime.

109. Israel's illegal creation following the occupation of Palestine, its massacre of thousands of innocent Palestinians, its ruthless attacks on neighbouring countries, its waging of cyber warfare, its assassination of nuclear scientists and its continual threats of military attack, gave an indication of the additional threat to regional and global peace and security posed by nuclear weapons in the hands of such an irresponsible regime.

110. There was no limit to Israel's aggression and its disregard for international law. Its clandestine development of nuclear weapons not only violated the basic principles of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the NPT, but also stood in clear defiance of the long-standing demands and concerns of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations member States. The 2010 NPT Review Conference had unanimously called on Israel to accede promptly to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, and Israel had rejected and disregarded that call.

111. The inaction imposed on the international community by certain States over the preceding several decades to prevent it from addressing Israel's operation, with support from the United States and the European Union, of an illegal nuclear weapons programme, was tantamount to condoning that programme. As a result, the Israeli regime had had the audacity to explicitly acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons.

112. Until Israel acceded to the NPT and placed its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards, it was reasonable, in Iran's view, to maintain the current item on the agenda of the General Conference. At the same time, it was expected that the Director General would make concrete recommendations for the application of full-scope safeguards to Israeli nuclear facilities. It damaged the credibility of the Agency to allow Israel, a non-party to the NPT, to divert Member States' attention away from its nuclear weapons and unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and towards the peaceful nuclear activities of Agency Member States party to the NPT.

113. Iran once again proposed that the Agency send a fact-finding mission to Israel and report to Member States on its verification activities with regard to Israeli nuclear facilities. The Israeli regime had threatened and attacked other countries from the beginning, especially their nuclear facilities, in clear violation of the 1990 General Conference resolution on the prohibition of all armed attacks against nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes whether under construction or in operation (GC(34)/RES/533). In Iran's view, the Agency could play a significant role in removing the concerns of the people in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world regarding Israel's nuclear capabilities.

114. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) recalled that all the Arab States had acceded to the NPT while Israel alone in the Middle East remained outside its framework and continued to pursue a clandestine nuclear programme which was not subject to international oversight, in defiance of the resolutions of international bodies. Israel's persistent refusal to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards threatened the security and stability of all States in the Middle East and undermined the entire nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. Syria deplored the double standards of some influential States which stressed the universal nature of the NPT and yet ignored that principle where Israel was concerned.

115. The resolution adopted by the General Conference in 2009 on Israeli nuclear capabilities (GC(53)/RES/17) had expressed the concern of many Member States over Israel's possession of nuclear weapons which were not subject to international oversight, and had called upon Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency comprehensive safeguards.

116. Israel had used every means at its disposal and every pretext to avoid undertaking international obligations and subjecting its nuclear programme to international supervision, rejecting all initiatives aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The allegations made against Syria by the delegate of Israel during the general debate the day before were based on fabricated information. It was Israel which had attacked Syria five years earlier and then refused to cooperate with the Agency's investigations, while Syria had cooperated fully. Israel's refusal to provide information on the munitions used in the attack meant that the accuracy of Israel's allegations could not be verified. Other allegations made by Israel during the current session of the General Conference were merely cheap political propaganda intended to obscure the issue of Israel's occupation of Arab territories, its settlement policy and its oppression of the Arab peoples of Palestine, Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

117. Mr ULIYANOV (Russian Federation) welcomed the decision by the Arab States to refrain from submitting a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities as a timely gesture of goodwill, in view of the forthcoming conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. He hoped that the Arab States' constructive signal would be duly appreciated by other States in the region.

118. Mr AZOULAY (Israel) regretted that, once again, the General Conference had to endure the unrelenting efforts of the Arab Group to force a discussion on the current agenda item. The Group's real intention was to divert the General Conference's attention away from the safeguards violations by Iran and Syria which were the subject of ongoing Agency investigations. In fact, the greatest threat to the region was posed by those States which pursued their own aims, disguised as States party to the NPT. A large majority of Member States had voted against the 2009 resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities (GC(53)/RES/17), which was why the Arab Group had refrained from submitting the same draft resolution since then. It persisted, however, in ignoring the wishes of the majority by obliging the General Conference to discuss such a politically charged and divisive issue. In any case, no discussion or draft resolution in an international forum could take the place of direct talks between the States of the region. The Arab Group's pursuit of a resolution showed that it was not interested in genuine dialogue, on the basis of equality, to ensure the security of all States concerned.

119. The greatest threat to peace and security in the Middle East and beyond was the nuclear weapons programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the raising of accusations against Israel would not change that sombre reality. The General Conference should clearly indicate its desire to drop that ill-conceived agenda item once and for all.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

IAEA Scientific Forum 2012

Food for the Future: Meeting the Challenges with Nuclear Applications

Report to the 56th IAEA General Conference

Dr Karen Hulebak

Mr President, Director General, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased and honoured to be given this opportunity to present to the General Conference the report on the IAEA Scientific Forum 2012, whose theme was *Food for the Future: Meeting the Challenges with Nuclear Applications*.

Mr President,

Among the Millennium Development Goals for 2015, we need to halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger and ensure environmental sustainability through the integration of principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes. Although progress has been made, experts tell us that approximately one billion people still go to bed hungry each night. It is also estimated that almost one-third of all food produced for human consumption, or 1.3 billion tons, is lost or wasted each year. These statistics are truly sobering.

Mr President,

Having focussed on water last year, the Director-General decided that he would give priority in 2012 to another major global challenge, global food insecurity. Thus, the 2012 Scientific Forum examined the challenges related to the improvement of food production, food protection and food safety through the use of nuclear applications.

During the opening session, the Director General noted that the IAEA is actively supporting Member States in their quest to improve global food security through the provision of safe and wholesome food supplies for rapidly expanding populations.

The Director General was joined by a very distinguished panel who emphasized the successful collaboration between the IAEA and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), discussed the role of nuclear techniques in food and agriculture and gave concrete examples of efforts made by the IAEA and other organizations to improve food security worldwide.

In the session on **“Increasing Food Production”** it was noted the world will need to produce 70% more food between now and 2050 to satisfy the demand of a population in excess of 9 billion people. In this regard, the intensification and diversification of more and higher quality food in a climate-smart and sustainable manner whilst protecting the environment is therefore critical to smallholder farmers and is the key to poverty reduction and increased food security.

The Forum noted that increasing global populations face the challenge of substantially increasing food production under conditions of severe land degradation that has led to a significant reduction in the productive capacity of agricultural lands. Sustainable soil management is therefore critical to the improvement of agricultural productivity.

The panellists also highlighted the fact that education and extension play a key role in providing agricultural producers with the knowledge and incentive for the management of soil productivity.

Mutation breeding also is also playing a critical role in increasing crop production and the release of improved varieties of crops through the application of nuclear technologies and improved management practices that increase crop yield and improve the quality of seeds provided to farmers.

In addition to improved crop production practices, improved animal production practices were considered as an important component of overall food security.

In the session on **“Ensuring Food Protection”** it was noted that global food insecurity is inherently linked to pests and diseases that harm or kill livestock and crops, as well as people working in rural agricultural areas. The losses caused by diseases and pests at both the pre- and post-harvest levels average 30–40% of the agricultural outputs, making returns on agricultural investments in land, seeds, water, fertilizer, animal feed, labour and other inputs correspondingly inefficient.

In addition, the world is currently facing an unprecedented increase of invasive animal and plant diseases and pests which threaten food security by causing serious losses in production and necessitate costly control measures, including the use of pesticides. Outbreaks of secondary pests, the development of resistance of pests to pesticides and the increasing threat of zoonotic diseases to public health cause serious barriers to national and international trade, causing major losses in export incomes.

Nuclear techniques developed and transferred by the IAEA can provide effective, target-specific and environment-friendly animal and plant pest and disease control methods, thus contributing to food security by reducing serious losses due to pests and diseases; reducing production costs and the need for agrochemicals; and overcoming sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to international trade of agricultural products.

To give a concrete example, the sterile insect technique (SIT), when integrated with other suppression techniques, can reduce losses, eradicate invasive insect pests and facilitate international trade, and can eradicate insect pests or vectors that transmit diseases of veterinary and medical importance.

The laboratories of the FAO/IAEA Joint Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture play an important role in the development and dissemination of nuclear technologies that efficiently manage or defeat crop diseases and pests. The development rapid and advanced diagnostic

technologies to Member States should be further expanded and the Joint Division's laboratories and coordinated research project network should be used to the fullest extent.

In the session on “**Enhancing Food Safety**”, it was noted that the IAEA plays a key role in the development of systems for the control of chemical contaminants in food, the application of traceability systems to identify and manage emerging food safety problems and trends, and the provision of information on food origin and authenticity that can help ensure food safety throughout the entire food production chain.

It was further noted that food irradiation is strongly supported by the IAEA as a proven and effective post-harvest treatment to improve food safety and maintain quality through the reduction of bacterial contamination or for the control of insect pests in agricultural commodities, without the need for chemicals or additives.

The panellists noted that food irradiation is one of the few technologies which address both food quality and safety. Therefore, food irradiation is a safe and valuable technology. Applications of food irradiation for sanitary (human health) and phytosanitary (plant health) purposes helps to ensure food safety and quality and facilitate international trade while at the same time generating significant foreign exchange through the import and export of foodstuffs worldwide.

In the area of food contamination control, the Scientific Forum noted that exposure to chemicals and contaminants in the food supply represents a serious threat to the health of millions of people worldwide, particularly those in developing countries with poor nutritional status.

The IAEA can play an important role to ensure food safety and facilitate international trade as a coordinator of a global network of food safety laboratories through the development and dissemination of traceability and contaminant control technologies and increased collaboration between multiple stakeholders throughout the food production chain.

Mr President, Director General, Distinguished Delegates,

In concluding, the Scientific Forum showed the significant capabilities that have been established in the Member States with the assistance of the IAEA. However, more still needs to be done to optimize capabilities in the use of nuclear sciences and technologies to improve food security worldwide and here the IAEA plays an essential role.