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President: Mr AZEEZ (Sri Lanka)

Later: Mr BAILEY (Canada)

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¹ GC(58)/22.

Abbreviations used in this record:

Biological Weapons Convention	Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on their Destruction
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
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
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
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
UN	United Nations

– Report on the Scientific Forum 2014

1. The PRESIDENT, recalling that the theme of the Scientific Forum 2014 had been “Radioactive Waste: Meeting the Challenge — Science and Technology for Safe and Sustainable Solutions”, invited the Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2014, Mr Magnus Vesterlind, to present the report on it.
2. Mr VESTERLIND (Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2014) presented the report, which is reproduced in the Annex.
3. The PRESIDENT thanked Mr Vesterlind for his report and commended him and the Secretariat on the success of the Scientific Forum 2014.

19. Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(58)15; GC(58)/L.1)

4. The PRESIDENT said that a draft resolution submitted by Egypt was set out in document GC(58)/L.1.
5. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that his country wished to support the Agency’s work in the area of safeguards, pursuant to Article III of the NPT.
6. The General Conference and the NPT Review Conferences had attached high priority to the accession of all States in the Middle East to the NPT and the placement of all nuclear facilities in the region under the comprehensive safeguards system. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference had extended the NPT indefinitely and had also adopted a resolution on the Middle East, the international community having realized that the continued existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in that region undermined the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime and the credibility of the safeguards regime as a whole.
7. Egypt was submitting the draft resolution with a view to reaffirming the commitment of the international community to support the Agency as it played a pivotal role in establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. The text² was similar to that of the resolution adopted by the General Conference at its 2013 regular session. A delicate balance had been sought with a view to reaching a consensus regarding its content and ensuring that the Member States of the Agency shouldered their responsibility to ensure that all nuclear facilities in the Middle East were placed under the Agency’s safeguards regime.
8. Averting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East depended primarily on the international community assuming its responsibilities and addressing all issues related to proliferation in the region in accordance with international law and without applying double standards. A vote in favour of the draft resolution would send a message to the States of the region regarding the seriousness of the international community and the credibility of the nuclear-weapon States as regards the principles that they advocated. The positive message thus transmitted would convince States that had acceded to the

² GC(57)/RES/15.

NPT and placed their nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards of the benefits of the decision they had taken. It would also demonstrate a firm stand against States that opposed nuclear disarmament and refused to accede to any nuclear non-proliferation agreement or apply nuclear safeguards.

9. Mr NAJAVI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, reiterated its position of principle in the matter as follows:

- “a. NAM strongly believes that stability cannot be achieved in a region where massive imbalances in military capabilities are maintained, particularly through the possession of nuclear weapons, which allow one party to threaten its neighbours and the region.
- “b. NAM considers the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East as a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and reiterates its support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.
- “c. NAM is convinced that the effective and efficient application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East promotes greater confidence among States in the region. Accordingly, NAM considers that achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East region is the first practical step towards that end, and is a necessary step towards the establishment of an NWFZ there.”

10. NAM welcomed the fact that its members party to the NPT had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency in fulfilment of their obligation under Article III.1 of that Treaty, as non-nuclear-weapon States. NAM noted that all States of the Middle East except for Israel were party to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards. NAM regretted Israel’s continued insistence that the issue of Agency safeguards could not be addressed in isolation from the regional peace process; there was no automatic sequence making the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East dependent on a peace settlement there — in fact, the former would contribute to the latter.

11. NAM also regretted the fact that the Director General had not been able to make further progress in fulfilling his mandate, pursuant to resolution GC(57)/RES/15, regarding the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East.

12. In the belief that all Member States should cooperate in rectifying what was an unacceptable situation, NAM called for their active participation in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East as a priority.

13. Noting that the Director General would continue consultations in accordance with his mandate regarding the early application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East, NAM welcomed the Director General’s efforts to encourage the development and consideration of relevant new ideas and approaches that might help to move his mandate forward, and it requested the Director General to continue briefing Member States regularly on those efforts.

14. The NAM members party to the NPT recalled the consensus decision contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the convening, in 2012, of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They were profoundly disappointed that the conference had still not taken place. The failure to convene the conference in 2012 had been contrary to the letter and spirit of the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and violated the collective agreement of the States parties to the NPT contained in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. They strongly rejected the conveners’ allegations regarding

impediments to the convening of the conference on schedule. They urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation to convene the conference without any further delay in order to avoid a negative impact on the credibility of the NPT, on the preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference and on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

15. NAM requested the Director General to continue his consultations with Member States on arrangements conducive to achieving the objective of the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

16. NAM, which was fully committed to cooperating with the Director General and supporting his efforts in implementing resolution GC(57)/RES/15, endorsed the draft resolution submitted by Egypt.

17. Ms ZAFARY-ODIZ (Israel) said that a draft resolution on the Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East had been before the General Conference each year for several years, but in recent years the draft resolution had become a manifestation of its sponsor's departure from the tradition of consultations and consensus. The sponsor had avoided any dialogue with Israel on the contents of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.1.

18. Her country attached importance to the non-proliferation regime and endorsed its goals. Nevertheless, the geopolitical situation in the Middle East clearly demonstrated that the NPT could not provide an answer to the unique security challenges of a region where States parties to the NPT were violating it. Adherence to the NPT was not a goal in itself: calls for universal adherence had to be judged in the light of the specific characteristics of the region and the refusal by several Arab States and the Islamic Republic of Iran to recognize the State of Israel.

19. Israel had consistently pursued a responsible policy in the nuclear domain, reflecting its position as regards regional security in all its aspects, including the establishment in the Middle East of an effectively verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. However, a comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and full compliance by all States of the region with their non-proliferation obligations were essential prerequisites for the establishment of such a zone there. The current regrettable situation in the Middle East and the multiple threats, conventional and non-conventional alike, justified Israel's approach.

20. Israel believed that the path leading to a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East should begin with the building of trust among the States of the region through direct dialogue. Without that, it would be impossible to initiate the gradual transition from confrontation to cooperation and to build consensus on the necessary measures involving wider regional peace and security interests.

21. Israel was committed to sincere and open dialogue with its neighbouring countries on all regional security-related issues. Accordingly, it had participated, at a senior diplomatic level, in five rounds of multilateral consultations in Switzerland attended by many regional parties. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic had chosen not to take part.

22. The lesson learned from other regions was that the establishment of a framework for regional security presupposed a collective political desire of the regional parties to engage with each other, and to take into consideration the security concerns of each State.

23. While Israel was demonstrating a sincere commitment to the process of confidence-building in the region, its Arab neighbours were demonstrating a commitment to tabling divisive draft resolutions in which Israel was singled out.

24. In view of the uncooperative attitude of the sponsor of the draft resolution, Israel could not support paragraph 2 thereof. She therefore requested that separate votes be taken on paragraph 2 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

25. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba) expressed regret over the lack of progress in implementing resolution GC(57)/RES/15 on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East and urged the General Conference to take the necessary decisions to ensure its implementation.

26. The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would be a major contribution to regional and worldwide peace and stability and a major step towards global nuclear disarmament.

27. A necessary first step would be Israel's adherence to the NPT and placement of all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. Unfortunately, while certain countries continued to support its nuclear programme, there could be no hope of Israel undertaking any such commitment.

28. Cuba was concerned about the unjustifiable failure to convene, in 2012, an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As an integral part of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the conference should be held in the current year, without further delay.

29. Ms PETERSEN (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her country supported efforts aimed at the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East as an effective means of contributing to peace and stability in that region, in particular in the light of recent, tragic events. The Agency could play a fundamental role in that regard, by promoting adherence to comprehensive safeguards agreements with a view to building confidence among the States of the region. In resolution 68/27, the UN General Assembly called upon all countries in the Middle East which had not yet done so to place all of their nuclear activities under Agency safeguards pending the establishment of an NWFZ in the region. Israel was the only country in the Middle East that possessed nuclear weapons and was not party to the NPT.

30. At its second summit in January 2014, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States had expressed regret that agreement had not been reached on convening an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which was an integral element of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Aside from making an important contribution to nuclear disarmament, the establishment of such a zone would constitute a major step towards peace in the Middle East. Venezuela regretted the lack of progress towards convening the conference and called on the international community to work together towards achieving that goal.

31. Mr SEOKOLO (South Africa) said that his country was of the firm conviction that NWFZs played an important role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that their establishment enhanced regional and global peace and security, strengthened the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributed to attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament.

32. The Pelindaba Treaty stated that the establishment of other NWFZs, especially in the Middle East, would also enhance the security of the African region. South Africa therefore continued to call for the establishment of an NWFZ — in fact, of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction — in the Middle East.

33. In its resolution GC(57)/RES/15, the General Conference had rightly affirmed the urgent need for all States in the Middle East to accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure among all States in the region.

34. South Africa recalled the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference calling for the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States of the region. South Africa noted with concern that the conference had still not been convened. The 1995 resolution on the Middle East adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference had been part of the package of decisions that had enabled the NPT to be extended indefinitely. That issue became even more pertinent in the light of the forthcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference. It was clear that time was running out and that the conference was long overdue.

35. South Africa continued to support the universal application of the NPT and called on States that were not party, including Israel, to accede to the Treaty and place all their nuclear material and facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

36. Mr ESTRADA ROMÁN (Nicaragua) said that his country welcomed all efforts aimed at establishing NWFZs, including in the Middle East, with a view to achieving peace and stability.

37. The universalization of the NPT was a prerequisite for providing the international community with assurances about safeguards and non-proliferation. That goal could be achieved only through dialogue and diplomacy. His country fully supported the draft resolution on the Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East because it contributed to the establishment of peace and stability in the region.

38. Peace in the Middle East could be achieved only through the adoption of credible confidence-building measures aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons with a view to establishing a NWFZ. It was of fundamental importance that an international conference on that subject be held as soon as possible.

39. Nicaragua was concerned that some nuclear programmes in the world were still not subject to Agency safeguards. Such a situation was not justifiable on any basis and it was worrying that some nuclear-weapon States were ignoring it. Fundamental human rights and human life should prevail over conflict of any kind. A responsible and humanitarian approach should be taken to non-proliferation issues irrespective of the context in which they were being discussed.

40. All States should support the Agency in discharging its mandate pursuant to the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Nicaragua firmly supported any efforts aimed at improving the situation in the Middle East, especially humanitarian ones, and measures to strengthen bilateral channels through dialogue and diplomacy.

41. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) reiterated his country's support for the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. Syria believed that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, was a prerequisite for security and stability in the region. However, the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East did not dissipate the legal obligations incumbent on nuclear-weapon States in the region: on the contrary, it enhanced the importance of expediting compliance with those obligations and of eliminating all categories of nuclear weapons.

42. All States in the Middle East except for Israel had acceded to the NPT and accepted the Agency's comprehensive safeguards. Successive Israeli governments had failed to cooperate seriously with the international community in that regard, thus substantially impeding progress towards the establishment of an NWFZ in the region.

43. The dilatory conduct of Israel and its allies had also obstructed the implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference recommendation concerning the convening of a conference in 2012 on the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Syria had welcomed the action plan agreed upon by the 2010 NPT Review Conference and had

supported the efforts to convene a conference in 2012. It was therefore gravely concerned about the lack of progress in that regard.

44. Nineteen years had passed since the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, as one of a series of resolutions adopted without a vote that led to the indefinite extension of the NPT. Influential States and the sponsors of those resolutions had been expected, in return, to address the concerns of the countries of the region. Unfortunately, that had not yet occurred and Syria feared that a similar fate would befall the conference on the Middle East envisaged in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

45. Syria had been one of the first countries to advocate, in 1974, the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. It still firmly believed that security and stability in the region could not be achieved while the Zionist entity's military nuclear capabilities remained outside international control and while influential members of the UN Security Council continued to support that situation. Syria urged NPT States Parties, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to take vigorous action to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, first and foremost by exerting pressure on Israel to accede promptly and unconditionally to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

46. Mr NAJAFI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that 40 years had passed since the introduction of the Iranian initiative for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East. The resolutions on that subject which had been repeatedly adopted without a vote by the UN General Assembly since 1980 reflected the importance of the issue in the volatile region of the Middle East.

47. By acceding to the NPT and placing its peaceful nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, Iran had demonstrated its determination to help bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In August 2012, in his historic speech at the 16th NAM Summit, held in Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader had stated that nuclear weapons neither ensured security, nor consolidated political power; rather they were a threat to both security and political power. Iran had proposed the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and was committed to it. Having ratified all major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, Iran was determined to comply with its international commitments.

48. Universal adherence to the NPT would effectively ensure the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. Iran's unswerving support for the establishment of such a zone, with the ultimate objective of bringing about a world free of nuclear weapons, was indisputable.

49. It was regrettable that, in spite of decades-long global efforts, no progress had been made towards establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East, owing to the refusal of Israel to accede to the NPT and subject its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to the Agency's verification regime. Given Israel's intransigence, it was very doubtful whether such a zone could be established in the near future.

50. Despite the wish of the international community, reflected in the resolution on the Middle East adopted in 1995 by the NPT Review and Extension Conference and in related resolutions of the UN General Assembly, the Agency's General Conference and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Israel, confident of the political and military support of certain permanent members of the UN Security Council, had neither acceded to the NPT nor placed its secret nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards.

51. As stated in the Director General's report set out in document GC(58)/15, All States of the Middle East region except for Israel were parties to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards. It was a matter of regret that the Israeli regime, supported by its allies, was continuing with its illegal nuclear programme without any Agency verification and had not

even declared its intention to accede to the NPT. Its prohibited nuclear activities seriously threatened regional peace and security and endangered the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

52. The inaction imposed on the UN Security Council over the past several decades as regards addressing the issue of the well-documented nuclear weapons programme of Israel had emboldened the Israeli regime to explicitly acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons — an act that had been condemned by NAM.

53. The unilateral decision of one of the conveners to postpone, for fictitious reasons, the conference — planned for 2012 — on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had been aimed at protecting Israel from international condemnation. It had run counter to a unanimous decision taken by the 2010 NPT Review Conference and had undermined the credibility of the NPT and the preparations for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The conveners of the aforementioned conference on the Middle East should have honoured their commitments to convene the conference, without any preconditions. Unfortunately, some had resorted to such tactics as organizing ostentatious consultations outside the framework of the United Nations and raising irrelevant and unwarranted issues in order to divert focus from the objectives originally agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

54. The failure to convene the Middle East conference was a serious error and a setback to the NPT review process. Those responsible should be held accountable to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Iran had been engaged in consultations with the conference facilitator and had officially declared its willingness to participate in the conference in 2012. It regretted that the conference had not been held and would pursue the issue vigorously during the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

55. The PRESIDENT recalled that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on paragraph 2 of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.1.

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

57. Spain, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

58. 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, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, 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, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Angola, Botswana, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, India, Lesotho, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Uganda, United States of America, Zambia.

59. There were 113 votes in favour and 1 against, with 15 abstentions. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was adopted.

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

61. The PRESIDENT recalled that the representative of Israel had requested that a separate vote be taken on the whole of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.1.

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

63. Chile, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

64. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, 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, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, 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, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Botswana, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Israel, Lesotho, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Togo, Uganda, United States of America, Zambia.

65. There were 117 votes in favour and none against, with 13 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

66. Ms KENNEDY (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country was continuing to work for NPT universality and a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

67. Her country remained committed to the holding of the proposed Helsinki conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass

destruction and had been working actively with the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the conference facilitator, Mr Laajava, to help the regional parties reach a consensus on acceptable arrangements for such a conference. The United States was encouraged that the parties had participated in five rounds of direct consultations on the agenda, modalities and documents for the conference, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the regional States themselves. Israel had demonstrated its commitment to the process by sending high-level officials to participate substantively in all five rounds of consultations.

68. However, the manner in which the issues related to establishing a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction had been raised in the General Conference, namely the tabling of a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, undermined the prospects for constructive dialogue among the regional parties and the continuing efforts to hold the Helsinki conference in the near future.

69. The United States, which had abstained in the vote, hoped that the General Conference would return to consensus in future years, so that those issues might be addressed in a more collaborative and productive manner.

70. Mr BAILEY (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country, which called on all States that had not already done so to conclude with the Agency and bring into force promptly a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol, had consistently expressed itself in support of the establishment of a verifiable NWFZ in the Middle East.

71. In the past, the draft resolutions on the Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East had commanded a broad consensus, and Canada was disappointed that, in recent years, language had been introduced into them that had resulted in the collapse of that consensus. The resolution just adopted unduly and unhelpfully politicized a forum which had historically taken a more technical perspective on the issues involved.

72. Canada was also disappointed that the resolution did not address the serious issues of non-compliance in the Middle East, thus ignoring a critical aspect of the application of Agency safeguards there. Accordingly, Canada had abstained in both votes.

20. Israeli Nuclear Capabilities **(GC(58)/1/Add.1; GC(58)/17; GC(58)/L.2)**

73. 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(58)/1/Add.1 and to document GC(58)/17.

74. Mr MARAFI (Kuwait), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, introduced the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2. He said that the Group's support for the nuclear non-proliferation regime was genuine and not mere lip service: all the Arab States had acceded to the NPT and had agreed in 1995 to its indefinite extension. Israel was the only State in the Middle East that refused to accede to the Treaty, thereby impeding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons.

75. Israel's determination to possess nuclear weapons, its refusal to accede to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities and programmes under comprehensive Agency safeguards, and its non-compliance with international resolutions constituted a unique case of exceptionality and impunity. It relied on the support and protection of international Powers who claimed to support an NWFZ in the Middle East. The persistence of that situation was unacceptable and should be brought to

an end so that all States in the region were treated as a single group in terms of the rules and obligations that applied.

76. Agreement had been reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT on the basis of a number of commitments and obligations set forth in the decisions and conclusions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Top priority had been given to the obligations set out in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which called for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in that region. The failure to abide by those commitments and obligations had undermined the credibility of the NPT and raised questions about the usefulness of the extension and its legal foundations.

77. The Arab States had taken prompt and wholehearted action at various levels and in diverse international forums to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In particular, an attempt had been made to convene an international conference in 2012 with a view to implementing the commitments set out in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The Arab States had taken positive and serious action for the four years since 2010, notwithstanding the stalling and procrastination tactics designed to prevent the convening of the conference. The other party had displayed increasing intransigence. An example of the flexibility and goodwill shown by the Arab States was their voluntary decision not to submit a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities to the General Conference in 2011 and 2012 so as to prevent its submission being used as a pretext for thwarting the convening of the conference. Instead of expressing appreciation, however, other parties had responded with disdain and sharply worded statements.

78. In spite of the lack of real progress towards convening the Middle East conference, some speakers at the 2013 session of the General Conference had referred to progress and positive trends. Given the absence of developments since then, the similar statements being made at the current session to reassure the international community were unsubstantiated and failed to reflect reality.

79. Contrary to Israel's claims, the Arab Group considered that international action to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East would contribute to efforts to achieve peace there. All the Arab States had sent messages to the UN Secretary-General endorsing the initiative launched by Egypt at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in support of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Israel's claims that it was first necessary to achieve peace were simply an attempt to remain indefinitely outside the scope of the NPT, especially since Israel persistently undermined all efforts to that end. That country posed the main obstacle to establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East and showed no sign of changing its attitude. The threat posed by Israeli nuclear capabilities must therefore be taken seriously. Concern regarding Israel's possession of nuclear weapons was exacerbated by the fact that most of its leaders seemed incapable of exercising restraint and tended to rely on the use of force. They did not hesitate to use lethal weapons against defenceless civilians, as demonstrated recently in Palestine before the eyes of the world.

80. It was ironic that Israel was among the front ranks of those calling for the application of the safeguards regime, although it refused to accede to the NPT and possessed nuclear weapons and programmes that were not subject to international safeguards. That situation was totally unacceptable. The Arab States had therefore decided to submit a draft resolution to the current session of the General Conference in order to reaffirm the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and to highlight the threat posed by the current situation to regional and international peace and stability. In doing so, the Arab States were not singling out Israel to the same extent that Israel was singling out and isolating itself.

81. The Arab States were surprised to note that some Member States were doing their utmost to prevent light from being shed on Israeli nuclear capabilities and to prevent the adoption of international resolutions mentioning Israel by name. The States in question contradicted their own declared positions: they disregarded the principle of universality of the NPT when discussing Israeli nuclear capabilities, but supported and adopted resolutions referring to other States by name.

82. The Arab Group considered that the General Conference agenda item now under consideration was no less important than any other agenda item, given its direct link to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Any assertion to the contrary implied the application of double standards. The Group was therefore surprised that, whenever it proposed the inclusion of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda, some parties argued that the Agency's technical mandate precluded it from considering political issues. That argument had no basis in reality, since the item had been discussed at many previous sessions of the Conference.

83. Israel's nuclear activities had long been a source of concern for many countries throughout the world and had been discussed in numerous international forums, as demonstrated by the long list of resolutions included in the explanatory memorandum submitted by the Arab Member States in document GC(57)/1/Add.1.

84. The Arab Group thanked those States that continued to support its cause. It was essential for all States, in line with their legal and moral principles and obligations, to oppose any obstacle to the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2. It was a fair and realistic text that was consistent with the principle of the universality of the NPT and the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

85. Mr NAJAFI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that it strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region where a massive imbalance in military capabilities continued to exist, particularly owing to the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons was enabling one country to threaten its neighbours and other countries in the region.

86. NAM welcomed the fact that its members party to the NPT had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency as non-nuclear-weapon States in fulfilment of their obligations under Article III.1 of the NPT. NAM noted that all States of the Middle East except Israel were party to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards.

87. NAM considered that the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East would be a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament, and it continued to advocate the establishment of such a zone in accordance with the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

88. A selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East was undermining the viability of the Agency's safeguards regime. Such an approach had also resulted in the continuing dangerous presence of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, despite the repeated calls on Israel to subject those facilities and activities to comprehensive Agency safeguards.

89. NAM was gravely concerned about the dire consequences for international security of Israel's nuclear capabilities, which posed a serious threat to Israel's neighbours and to other States, and about the continuing provision to Israeli scientists of access to the nuclear facilities of one of the nuclear-weapon States.

90. Member States should cooperate in rectifying what was an unacceptable situation and achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East. Implementing resolution GC(53)/RES/17 would be a first step towards that end.

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

92. NAM reiterated its call for a complete ban on the transfer to Israel of nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, devices and other resources and on the provision to Israel of other assistance in nuclear-related scientific and technological fields.

93. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, in a 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, Agency documents were testimony to the contrary. Various General Conference resolutions adopted prior to 1994 regarding South Africa's nuclear capabilities had referenced UN General Assembly resolutions on relations between Israel and 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 UN Security Council resolutions.

94. Ms ZAFARY-ODIZ (Israel) expressed regret that the current agenda item had been tabled once again in the General Conference by the Arab Group, particularly as a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities had been rejected by the General Conference at its previous session. The issue was totally unrelated to the agenda of the General Conference and was beyond the scope of the Agency's mandate. It greatly politicized the Agency, harmed its professional integrity, drained its resources and diverted attention from the real problems that the Agency and the non-proliferation regime were faced with — first and foremost, attempts by certain States to develop nuclear weapons under the guise of their NPT membership. The Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran were two current examples.

95. The negative Arab initiative under discussion disregarded Israel's forthcoming approach regarding regional arms control and security, including weapons of mass destruction. That approach had been demonstrated by Israel's substantial participation, at a senior level, in five rounds of multilateral consultations held since October 2013 on the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The absence of Syria and Iran from those consultations should be seen as an indication of their lack of interest in the process. In Israel's view, the necessary elements to facilitate multilateral consultations included reaching consensus on the conceptual basis, agenda and concluding document of such a conference. Once agreement had been reached on those elements, it would be possible for regional parties to set a date for a conference.

96. The Arab Group's intensive efforts to advance the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2 negated every principle of dialogue, trust and confidence among regional States. The very idea of isolating Israel by means of a resolution contradicted the logic of multilateral consultations and dialogue. For its part, and despite the grave security situation in the Middle East region and continued terror attacks against Israeli citizens, Israel remained committed to the process of establishing a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction through sincere and open dialogue with its neighbouring countries. How could one expect genuine dialogue among regional parties, however, when Israel's Arab neighbours continued to choose the path of condemning and singling out the country in every possible international arena? Voting against the adoption of the draft resolution was a vote for regional dialogue. Adopting the draft resolution was bound to harm the Agency and its

credibility, and would have grave implications for the prospects and viability of the multilateral consultations.

97. She noted that on 7 September 2014, the Foreign Ministers of the Arab League appeared to have decided to abandon multilateral consultations altogether and to make the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities their prime goal. Apparently, 'Israel bashing' was the only unifying theme among the members of the Arab League.

98. By rejecting the unconstructive, political draft resolution, Member States would reaffirm that politically motivated initiatives aimed at singling out any Member State had no place at the General Conference. It would also send a clear message that direct dialogue and consensus among all regional States was the only way forward.

99. She requested that the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2 be put to a vote by roll call.

100. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that while all the Arab Member States of the Agency had acceded to the NPT and expressed their full readiness to undertake serious practical steps towards the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East, Israel and its allies had continued to oppose that urgent objective, rejecting all calls made through numerous international resolutions. Most recently, UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/68/65 of 5 December 2013, had reaffirmed the importance of Israel's prompt accession to the NPT and called upon Israel not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards as an important confidence-building measure and as a step towards enhancing regional and international peace and security.

101. The adoption by the General Conference in 2009 of resolution GC(53)/RES/17 had sent a clear message from the international community to Israel, requesting that it accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. That resolution reflected the concern of a large number of Member States over Israel's nuclear capabilities, which were not subject to any international controls, and the threat they posed to peace and security, not only in the Middle East, but in the world as a whole.

102. Syria was surprised at the international silence in the face of Israel's intentional violation of all such resolutions, and was even more surprised by the double standards being applied by certain NPT States Parties in turning a blind eye to any action taken by Israel to develop and maintain its nuclear capabilities. Their support and assistance in that regard constituted a violation of their obligations under the NPT.

103. In order to achieve regional and international security and stability, the international community needed to place firm pressure on Israel — the only State in the region with military nuclear capabilities outside of international control — to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. International pressure also had to be put on Israel to bring an end to its repeated attacks on the sovereignty of neighbouring States and its hostile and arbitrary expansion into their air, sea and land space. The United Nations had to take responsibility for achieving that objective.

104. Syria called on all States to vote in favour of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2.

105. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) noted that Israel was the only State in the Middle East that had not acceded to the NPT and had not placed all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. It was also the only State in the region that possessed a large nuclear arsenal and various

modern delivery systems, and the only one that had not displayed any real desire to engage in negotiations concerning the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

106. The concern in the region with respect to the Israeli military nuclear programme was not new: the international community had been aware of it since the 1980s, as evidenced by the large number of resolutions that had been adopted since then in numerous international forums.

107. During the 1980s and 1990s, the General Conference had adopted strongly worded resolutions every year on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat that addressed the dangerous repercussions on international peace and security and condemned Israel's refusal to renounce its nuclear weapons and to submit all its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards. It was only in recent years that the issue had not appeared on the agenda of the General Conference. That undermined Israel's accusations that the Arab Group was using it to divert attention from other thorny issues currently under deliberation related to the application of safeguards in other States in the Middle East.

108. The concern of the international community had now reached such a level that the elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East had become a priority, as recognized in the resolution on the Middle East that was adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. That resolution was one of a series that had led to the indefinite extension of the NPT and, as such, had become a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had confirmed that the resolution had lost none of its relevance over time, but rather that its implementation had become an urgent issue, in particular since the credibility of the entire non-proliferation regime was at stake.

109. Lebanon was therefore surprised at the persistence with which some Member States denied the facts and stated their opposition to the Arab Group raising the issue. It was regrettable that the flexibility shown by the Arab Group by refraining from submitting a draft resolution to the General Conference in 2010 and 2011, had not been appreciated by the other parties. It had taken that step to assist the efforts of the conveners of the 2012 conference on the establishment of Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, but instead it had been misconstrued as a fear of failure.

110. Lebanon appreciated the efforts of those States that were attempting to promote nuclear disarmament and highlight the disastrous humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. It was surprising, however, that some such States suddenly abandoned those noble principles where Israel was concerned, as though the Middle East were not a part of the world and the same principles and standards did not to apply to it as to all other regions.

111. The adoption of the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities was as necessary now as it had been in 2009, particularly given that the factors that had first led to its adoption not only persisted, but had become increasingly complicated and serious. Israel's continued policy of nuclear opacity was a matter of great concern to its neighbours as it demonstrated that country's ability to do as it pleased, while enjoying impunity and a lack of accountability on an international level. There was also a danger that the region would slide into an arms race with dire consequences, particularly in light of the current turbulent situation in the Middle East. Lebanon noted Israel's increasingly aggressive policies towards its neighbours, as not a month passed without the Israeli leaders unleashing a wave of threats against one country or another. The recent war on Gaza bore greatest witness to that. There was a need, greater than ever before, for positive initiatives that would ease the tensions of the turbulent situation in the Middle East and enhance the prospects for peace.

112. The postponement of the 2012 conference by a Power that should have spared no effort to ensure its success, had come as a great shock. If that mistake was not rectified by those responsible, it could put the future of the NPT at stake.

113. Lebanon called on the Agency and its Member States to stop burying their heads in the sand: a vote in favour of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2 would be a step in the right direction. The draft resolution highlighted the risks faced by everyone, including Israel and its people. Its adoption would place important pressure on Israel to abide by international law, particularly in the nuclear and humanitarian aspects, to commit to international standards of justice and basic human rights and to resolve conflicts through genuine positive means, rather than through the media.

114. Ms PETERSEN (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, in accordance with its pacifist stance, her country had supported the idea of a world free of nuclear weapons for decades. The only effective way to achieve that goal was for all States, without exception, to accede to relevant agreements negotiated within the United Nations and to respect and abide by the obligations set out therein, especially with regard to the NPT.

115. Nuclear disarmament and world peace were also being promoted within the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), on the grounds that the only antidote to the threat posed by nuclear weapons was their complete eradication. To that end, CELAC had reaffirmed its commitment to the NPT and urged all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate nuclear weapons from their doctrines, security policies, military strategies and conflict management approaches.

116. In the declaration from its ministerial conference in Algiers in May 2014, NAM had reiterated its call on Israel — the only country in the region that had not joined the NPT, declared its intention of doing so or renounced its possession of nuclear weapons — to accede to the NPT without preconditions and without delay, to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981), and to conduct its nuclear activities in accordance with the non-proliferation regime.

117. In resolution A/RES/68/65, the UN General Assembly had once again called on Israel to accede to the NPT without further delay, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards, as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security. Nevertheless, the Government of Israel continued to flout that and other resolutions of the General Assembly and the Agency's General Conference. It also refused to accede to the NPT or submit its advanced nuclear programme to Agency monitoring, thus threatening the confidence-building that was vital to achieve a lasting and much-needed peace in the Middle East.

118. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba), welcoming the fact that the issue had been included on the agenda of the General Conference, expressed concern at the acquisition of nuclear capabilities by Israel, which presented a serious and ongoing threat to the security of its neighbours and other States. Stability could not be achieved in a region where one country's possession of nuclear weapons resulted in an enormous imbalance in military capabilities. The issue of Israel was the main obstacle to establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. As the only country in the region that remained outside the NPT and had yet to indicate any willingness to join it, Israel must renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions and without delay, and immediately place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards.

119. It was well known that some of Israel's allies would go to lengths to avoid discussion of and decisions on Israeli nuclear capabilities by the General Conference. It would be not only a grave mistake, but also a flagrant breach of international responsibilities, however, to ignore such an important issue in order to placate those States. When other Member States were accused, without any evidence, of pursuing military nuclear programmes, it was argued that the seriousness of such

situations made it absolutely necessary for the Board of Governors and General Conference to keep them under constant consideration. When it came to Israel's nuclear capabilities, however, the positions of many Member States changed abruptly: a clearly inconsistent approach. The General Conference could on no account become complicit in applying such double standards. Peace and security in the Middle East would be gravely threatened if certain powerful States continued to adopt a permissive stance with respect to the Israeli nuclear issue. The governments in question must immediately halt the transfer to Israel of all equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices for use in the nuclear field, along with the provision of nuclear-related scientific and technological assistance, until Israel placed its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

120. Cuba supported keeping the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference.

121. Mr AL HUSSEINI (Jordan) said that, as the only State in the Middle East region that had not yet acceded to the NPT, Israel should do so, and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. That would facilitate the establishment of an NWFZ in the region, thus contributing to peace and security. It would also enable a greater focus to be placed on the region's economic and social development rather than on an arms race that would hinder development and increase tensions and mistrust.

122. Jordan welcomed initiatives calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction from all States in the Middle East region, and considered the adoption of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2 to fall within the obligations of Member States regarding the universalization of the NPT.

123. Mr NAJAFI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities had always been a source of serious concern for the international community. In the Final Document from the NAM summit meeting held in Tehran in August 2012, the Heads of State or Government of the NAM member States, had expressed great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which posed a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States. They had also condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals and had reiterated their support for the efforts of the Arab Group in Vienna to keep the issue of the Israeli nuclear capabilities under consideration by the Agency's General Conference.

124. Since 1982, the General Conference had in several resolutions called upon Israel to accede promptly to the NPT and put all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Furthermore, the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had recalled the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. However, ignoring legitimate international concerns, Israel was continuing to advance its nuclear capabilities with the assistance of certain other States, in flagrant contravention of all international norms. It was thereby not only jeopardizing regional and global security but also seriously undermining the Agency's verification mechanism.

125. There needed to be a total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities and resources to Israel. Iran was particularly concerned about the fact that Israeli scientists were being granted access to the nuclear facilities of certain nuclear-weapon States while nuclear scientists of States Parties to the NPT were being assassinated.

126. Israel's dark record of attacks or threats of attack on its neighbours and its irresponsible and brutal behaviour in the region, including recently against innocent people in Gaza, made it even more urgent for the international community to put an end to that country's nuclear capabilities.

127. In a very recent case, an unmanned aerial vehicle built and operated by Israel had violated Iranian airspace in an attempt to conduct a spy mission in the area of the Natanz nuclear facilities. That act of aggression was in flagrant violation of the relevant General Conference resolutions, including resolutions GC(XXIX)/RES/444 and GC(XXXIV)/RES/533 on the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities and installations. Such a serious threat against safeguarded nuclear facilities should not be overlooked, especially because such an act had also endangered Agency personnel. Nuclear capabilities in the hands of such an irresponsible and genocidal regime constituted an ongoing threat to the region and beyond.

128. Until the international community called for Israel's unconditional adherence to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, it was reasonable to retain the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference.

129. In his country's view, the adoption of the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2 would contribute to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. The reactions of Member States to Israel's covert nuclear weapons programme would distinguish the true supporters of the non-proliferation regime from those who employed double standards when it came to the universal application of the NPT.

130. The PRESIDENT invited the Conference to proceed to a roll-call vote on the draft resolution set out in document GC(58)/L.2, as requested by the representative of Israel.

131. Indonesia, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

132. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Angola, Argentina, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Holy See, India, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Singapore, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania.

133. There were 45 votes in favour and 58 against, with 27 abstentions. The draft resolution was rejected.

134. Mr VINHAS (Brazil), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country's abstention in the vote that had just taken place should not be seen as a sign of disagreement with the issue at hand. Brazil fully supported the universalization of the NPT and recognized the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

135. It was regrettable that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had not been convened, as planned, in 2012. Brazil urged all parties to work towards holding that conference at the earliest opportunity.

136. There had recently been a number of positive developments in the Middle East region, including the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chemical Weapons Convention and its destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal. There had also been unprecedented negotiations on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Such developments provided an encouraging context for the planned conference, which would be a crucial step in building confidence in the region. His country stood ready to provide any assistance required.

137. Mr COUNTRYMAN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said it was regrettable that a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities had again been submitted to the General Conference although, happily, it had not been adopted. There had been no winners in the vote that had just taken place: the discussion had been a diversion from the priority of the strengthening of the Agency, and the States of the Middle East engaging with one another. The United States remained committed to the universalization of the NPT and had worked hard to bring the relevant parties together for a the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons. He urged all the States of the region — Israel, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arab States — to display the determination needed to engage with their neighbours, convene the conference and begin the difficult task of building an NWFZ in the Middle East. Resolutions and speeches were no substitute for direct dialogue. The United States remained committed to holding the conference as soon as the regional parties had agreed on its agenda and modalities. The parties had discussed those matters directly and constructively, and it seemed likely that a consensus could be achieved.

138. Mr MISRA (India), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had abstained because it believed that the draft resolution had contained elements extraneous to the Agency.

139. Ms ZAFARY-ODIZ (Israel) said that her country welcomed the outcome of the vote, in which delegations had demonstrated their rejection of an attempt to divert the General Conference and the Agency from its real challenges and substantive tasks. The result was a clear message that the only way to achieve regional security was through direct dialogue and consensus among all States of the Middle East region. Regional security could be built through trust and confidence, not by avoiding challenges and singling out Israel for criticism. In rejecting the adoption of the draft resolution, delegations had resisted the attempt to pursue short-sighted and ill-motivated political gains. Israel remained committed to engaging directly with its Arab neighbours, as it had done over the past year by participating in multilateral consultations. She called upon the Arab States to do the same.

140. Mr BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as it was consistent with the principled position of the Russian Federation supporting universalization of the NPT. However, in view of the complexities involved in convening the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, his delegation had had serious doubts about the timeliness and expediency of the draft resolution.

141. Significant progress had been made over the past year in informal meetings on the convening of the conference, with the Arab States and Israel demonstrating a readiness to reach a compromise on a number of unresolved issues. It was still possible that the conference might be convened before the

end of 2014. However, the draft resolution just voted upon had contributed little to that prospect. As one of the parties mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference to convene the conference, the Russian Federation would have preferred to see a text expediting it. He called upon all States of the Middle East to focus on key aspects, such as the agenda and draft outcome document, in preparation for the conference. His country would provide any assistance it could.

142. Ms LE JEUNE D'ALLEGEEERSHECQUE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution because it believed that it was harmful to the prospects for convening a successful and inclusive conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Her country hoped that the conference would be convened as soon as possible, preferably by the end of 2014, on the basis of arrangements agreed by all States of the region. The current delay was understandably frustrating, but a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction was an ambitious goal which required time, patience and an inclusive approach. Progress had been made towards that goal, with five sets of informal consultations held in Switzerland over the preceding year, attended by Israel and the Arab States. Her country would continue its efforts to build trust and confidence between parties in its role as co-convenor. She urged all States of the region to continue to engage with the conference facilitator, the co-convenors and one another.

143. Ms GEELS (New Zealand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country had voted against the draft resolution because previous New Zealand Governments had adopted that position. There had just been a general election in New Zealand and, until the new Government was sworn in the following week, the previously established position needed to be maintained. Nonetheless, New Zealand had thought very carefully about moving to an abstention on the draft resolution because the reasons for a negative vote had grown increasingly thin.

144. Her country supported much of the substance of the draft resolution, including the concern expressed regarding Israel's refusal to join the NPT and its operation of nuclear facilities that were not subject to Agency safeguards. Those elements were consistent with New Zealand's strong support for the achievement of a sustainable solution to the security situation in the Middle East, including through the efforts being pursued under the auspices of the NPT.

145. The draft resolution nevertheless remained unbalanced, focusing solely on Israel and failing to refer to serious proliferation concerns about the activities of other countries in the region. New Zealand also questioned the wisdom of seeking to include Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of every session of the General Conference, a status that was not accorded to any other country-specific situation.

146. However, her country's principal reason for voting against the draft resolution in the past had been its assessment that its adoption would be counterproductive to other initiatives under way in the region, including diplomatic initiatives to improve the security situation in the Middle East and, since 2010, the efforts to facilitate the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

147. Given recent events in Gaza, the gridlock in the peace talks and the continuing moves by Israel to occupy Palestinian land, it was hard to see how adoption of the draft resolution could, in itself, have any seriously deleterious effect on the Middle East peace process. Moreover, New Zealand was deeply disappointed that, despite the strenuous efforts of many parties, it had not been possible to convene the planned conference.

148. New Zealand would be giving serious consideration to changing its vote on the draft resolution if similar conditions applied in the years ahead.

149. Mr FOO (Singapore), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had been a consistent and strong supporter of the universalization of the NPT and the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards. Singapore reiterated its call for all countries to accede to the NPT and for the DPRK to return to the Treaty. His country's abstention in the vote on the draft resolution should therefore not be read as a pronouncement on its substance.

150. Singapore strongly supported the establishment of a genuine and lasting peace in a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and hoped that all the relevant parties would engage in an open, genuine and constructive dialogue to that end. While Singapore regretted that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had failed to materialize to date, it took note of recent developments on the issue and strongly encouraged all parties to strive for the convening of the conference as soon as possible.

151. Mr FORMICA (Italy), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union, said that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Norway, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia aligned themselves with the statement he was about to make.

152. He noted the EU's commitment to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and regret that the conference on that issue, due to take place in 2012, had been postponed. The EU fully supported the preparations being made for a successful conference, in particular, the tireless efforts of its facilitator, Mr Laajava. The progress achieved recently during informal gatherings in Switzerland had given some grounds for hope. The EU called on all States in the region to urgently and proactively engage with the facilitator and co-conveners with the aim of convening the conference as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region.

153. A consensual approach was the best way to make progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and to build on the outcome. The EU deeply regretted that, despite its continued calls on Arab States to refrain from tabling the draft resolution, Member States had been faced with a vote thereon.

154. The EU had always promoted the universality of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, such as the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Furthermore, the EU had urged States that were party to the NPT to comply fully with its provisions and with all relevant UN Security Council and Agency resolutions. The EU called on all States in the Middle East region to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency and to accede to the additional protocol. Such actions would represent a crucial contribution to an overall improvement in the security situation and confidence in the region.

155. Mr KITANO (Japan), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had long emphasized that all States not party to the NPT, including Israel, should accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States and should conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the Agency.

156. The 2010 NPT Review Conference had agreed to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It was regrettable that such a conference had not yet been convened, but Japan noted that progress had been made in that regard among the countries concerned through informal consultations: such momentum needed to be maintained.

157. Japan had voted against the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities because it had supported the resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the whole Middle East region and considered a resolution that made pointed reference to Israel only to be unnecessary.

158. Japan sincerely hoped that the countries concerned would build confidence through constructive and sincere dialogue aimed at realizing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction at the earliest possible opportunity.

159. Princess Bajrakitiyabha MAHIDOL (Thailand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country's decision to abstain did not imply that it disagreed with the main thrust of the draft resolution or that it supported the narrative put forward by either side.

160. Thailand did not consider it justifiable to shift responsibility for making meaningful progress in the discussions to the international community. The only reason her country had abstained was in the hope of helping to maintain the positive atmosphere that was so desperately needed in the wider context of the peace process.

161. Thailand also wished to maintain the credibility of the NPT in advance of the forthcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference. All sides should make honest efforts to achieve substantive progress on the issue in accordance with the existing mandate.

162. Ms MOLARONI (San Marino), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country had always been in favour of the establishment of NWFZs and supported the action being taken to convene an international conference on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. San Marino believed, however, that a constructive, consensual and non-confrontational approach was required. It was only through the universalization of all international treaties and commitments aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons that world peace and security could be built.

163. Mr PHAM Hai Anh (Viet Nam), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of its consistent policy of supporting the three pillars of the NPT, namely nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

164. Viet Nam considered that the establishment of NWFZs around the world was a prerequisite for the achievement of the NPT goals. It therefore supported all efforts, including direct dialogue, aimed at the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

165. Mr SINGH (Fiji), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country supported efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace and to build trust in the Middle East. It espoused the goal of creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region. Fiji remained committed to the universality of the NPT and was convinced that progress in the peace process would improve the atmosphere for cooperation in support of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

166. Since the draft resolution failed to refer to the need for full compliance with non-proliferation obligations by all States in the Middle East, Fiji considered it to be limited in its ability to contribute to the breakthrough being sought in the region. Such compliance by all States was critical for building mutual confidence and security in the Middle East. His country would continue to contribute to international efforts to achieve progress towards the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

167. Mr MARAFI (Kuwait), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, expressed regret that the General Conference had failed to adopt the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities. The Arab Group

deplored the double standards applied by some Member States when discussing nuclear facilities that were not subject to comprehensive Agency safeguards. The Arab Group regretted that some States had announced their intention to vote against the draft resolution based on a misinterpretation of its content.

168. The General Conference had failed to adopt the draft resolution because a large number of States which actually supported its content had been pressurized to abstain.

169. The Arab Member States of the Agency were determined to continue publicizing the threat posed by Israel's undeclared nuclear capabilities. The continued possession of such capabilities, which were not subject to international oversight, would quash any attempt to create a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and have an adverse impact on regional and international peace and security. The Arab Group reaffirmed its commitment to the establishment of such a zone and thanked all States that had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.

IAEA Scientific Forum 2014

Radioactive Waste: Meeting the Challenge — Science and Technology for Safe and Sustainable Solutions

Report to the 58th IAEA General Conference

Mr Magnus Vesterlind

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 2014, whose theme was Radioactive Waste: Meeting the Challenge, Science and Technology for Safe and Sustainable Solutions.

Mr President,

As you know, the annual IAEA Scientific Forums are organised parallel to the General Conference and seek to showcase and advance the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology relevant to contemporary challenges.

This year the Director-General gave priority to all the steps in the management of radioactive waste generated from the use of nuclear technologies.

There were contributions from 21 presenters and four panellists. The presentations were open and clear and led to discussion between the presenters and audience. It was an interested and engaged audience that included members of delegations from IAEA Member States, both with and without nuclear power plants.

In his introduction to the Scientific Forum IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano talked about management of radioactive waste being an essential element of the Agency's work. He also noted that to derive the benefits of nuclear technology, it is the responsibility of Member States to manage the waste safely using robust and sustainable approaches.

The Forum addressed radioactive waste management as a journey from waste generation to disposal. The Director General provided a broad overview of key elements to consider for this journey. Waste comes in different varieties and with a range of properties, and management,

especially disposal, must be adapted to and suitable for each waste class. Doing this right requires a clear roadmap, or integrated strategy, from waste inventory to disposal. Adequate funding must also be carefully planned and provided for, and secured over the time it takes to fully implement all needed management steps, especially the disposal solutions.

All types of risks must be considered adequately to ensure waste is managed safely, securely, and under safeguards as required. All these aspects, part of the “irreversible commitment to manage radioactive waste as soon as nuclear technology is being used”, are a cost worth bearing when compared to all the benefits such use entails. The opening presentation provided a thorough overview of the breadth and depth of such benefits, such as cancer treatment, research, and power generation. Newcomer countries should take on board lessons learned from past experiences.

The following session developed in some detail the different steps that must be taken to manage waste; first to process waste from its generation into the form of a conditioned waste package, with special emphasis on the role and solutions available for waste and spent fuel storage. The relevance and importance of safe storage was emphasized, as well as the apparently increasing durations for which storage is or must be considered, while emphasizing the importance of the vigorous pursuit of disposal siting and implementation.

Mr President,

The ultimate step – disposal – received special attention in a dedicated session, and available, successfully operating disposal facilities for VLLW, LLW, and ILW illustrated that solutions for these do exist. Disposal of HLW and SNF, although not licensed yet anywhere, is nevertheless progressing successfully in several countries; Finland and Sweden having submitted license applications, France preparing its submission within two years, and a few other countries moving toward siting. Why we can have confidence in long term safety was also looked at with great attention, through a review of how safety of such deep geologic disposal are assessed, and how the use of underground research facilities and engineering demonstrators contribute to establishing a solid and sound basis for developing such safe solutions.

The panel session “The Path Ahead” focussed on how evolving nuclear technologies, such as better use of nuclear fuel, as well as more effective waste forms , advanced reactors and fuel cycles, could affect future waste management. The advantages of a thorium fuel cycle, which include a reduced waste management burden, was balanced against its disadvantages, such as greater technical challenges at the front end and lower energy efficiency. The potential for fast reactors to significantly reduce both the volume and the radiotoxicity of waste were also discussed. While the ongoing developments indeed hold promise to reduce the volume of waste managed, they are not yet in place. Therefore, implementing available safe waste management solutions should remain a priority.

While the Forum focused on available technologies and science to develop safe solutions, it also acknowledged that there is a fundamental political and societal component for establishing successful waste management solutions.

During closing remarks, the Director General, accompanied by the president of the 5th review meeting of the joint convention, Mr David Huizenga, and the Director of the European Commission Directorate for Nuclear Safety and Fuel Cycle of the Directorate General for Energy, Mr Massimo Garriba, joined in expressing their appreciation for a substantial, dynamic, and much appreciated Forum, and to which a sizable attendance contributed significantly. Director General reminded that all Member States should embrace, from the start, their responsibility for waste management, and that solutions do exist. Mr Huizenga emphasized that the Joint Convention is an essential tool for reaching a higher level of safety worldwide, but that responsibility for implementation rest with Member States. Mr Garriba explained the close relation between the Euratom Directive on radioactive waste Management and the Joint Convention, and outlined the obligations that result for the European Union Member States from this. Among this is the requirement of a decennial peer review of national waste management programmes, and that EC is cooperating with IAEA to ensure that a viable peer review service will be available to assist European Member States.

Mr President,

If there was one key message that has to be taken from the forum, it would be the following: there is a need for a comprehensive, integrated, cradle-to-grave plan. Anyone using any form of nuclear technology should start with the end in mind. That means starting out with a plan for ultimate disposal, not just temporary storage.

Thank you for your attention.