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President: Mr FORMICA (Italy)

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¹ GC(59)/25.

Abbreviations used in this record:

CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

– Report on the Scientific Forum 2015

1. The PRESIDENT, recalling that the theme of the Scientific Forum 2015 had been “Atoms in Industry: Radiation Technology for Development”, invited the Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2015, Ms Alumanda M. Dela Rosa, to present the report.
2. Ms DELA ROSA (Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2015) presented the report, which is reproduced in the Annex.
3. The PRESIDENT thanked Ms Dela Rosa for her report and congratulated her and the Secretariat on the success of the Scientific Forum 2015.

– Interim oral report of the Chair of the Committee of the Whole

4. Mr BENHOCINE (Algeria), Chair of the Committee of the Whole, reported on the Committee’s deliberations on agenda items 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 22, 23, 24 and 25.
5. Under item 9 “The Agency’s Financial Statements for 2014”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution in document GC(59)/3.
6. Under item 10 “The Agency’s Programme and Budget 2016–2017”, the Committee recommended that the Conference approve a regular budget figure for 2016 of €353 967 788 for the operational portion of the Regular Budget, and €8 032 000 for the capital portion of the Regular Budget, and accordingly adopt draft resolution A in document GC(59)/2, entitled “Regular Budget Appropriations for 2016”; that the Conference approve a target for voluntary contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2016 of €84 456 000 and accordingly adopt draft resolution B in document GC(59)/2, entitled “Technical Cooperation Fund Allocation for 2016”; and that the Conference approve the level of the Working Capital Fund for 2016 at €15 210 000 and accordingly adopt draft resolution C in document GC(59)/2, entitled “The Working Capital Fund in 2016”.
7. Under item 12 “Amendment to Article XIV.A of the Statute”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft decision contained in document GC(59)/L.2.
8. Under item 13 “Scale of Assessment of Member States’ contributions towards the Regular Budget”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution on page 3 of document GC(59)/13/Rev. 1.
9. Under item 14 “Measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/L.3.
10. Under item 16 “Strengthening of the Agency’s technical cooperation activities”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/L.7, as follows: “A. Strengthening of the Agency’s technical cooperation activities”; and “B. Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy”.

11. Under item 22 “Promotion of efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA decision making process”, the importance of maintaining and promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency’s decision-making processes and strengthening the Agency and its governing bodies had been highlighted.

12. The expansion of the membership of the Board of Governors, the enhancement of the role and authority of the General Conference and the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between the two bodies had been underlined by several Members.

13. The importance of the direct engagement and participation of all Member States in the decision-making process on issues relating to the Agency’s work had been emphasized by some Members.

14. The relevance and importance of the process currently under way for the early ratification of the amendment to Article VI of the Agency’s Statute had been mentioned in that context.

15. The necessity for the continuation of common efforts by all Member States, together with the Secretariat, to strengthen the Agency, promote transparency and achieve mutual interests had been emphasized.

16. The need for the Agency to reform and promote the efficiency of its working methods and adapt the application of procedures of its bodies to take advantage of advanced technologies, especially with regard to the use of electronic voting, had also been raised by some Members. The Secretariat had been requested to continue to examine the matter.

17. It had been noted that some Members had expressed their desire to continue consideration of that issue and to keep it as an item on the General Conference agenda.

18. The Committee had noted the responses provided by the Secretariat on that matter.

19. Under item 23 “Amendment to Article VI of the Statute”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft decision contained in document GC(59)/L6.

20. Under item 24 “Elections to the Agency’s Staff Pension Committee”, the Committee recommended that Mr Che Van Haastrecht from the delegation of Canada be elected as a member and that Mr Basit Akindele from the delegation of Nigeria and Mr Husham Ahmed from the delegation of Pakistan be elected as alternate members to represent the General Conference on the Agency’s Staff Pension Committee.

21. Under item 25 “Personnel”, the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/L.5.

The Agency’s Financial Statements for 2014 (agenda item 9)

22. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/3 was adopted.

The Agency’s Programme and Budget 2016–2017 (agenda item 10)

23. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/2 was adopted.

Amendment to Article XIV.A of the Statute (agenda item 12)

24. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft decision set out in document GC(59)/L.2 was adopted.

Scale of Assessment of Member States' contributions towards the Regular Budget (agenda item 13)

25. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out on page 3 of document GC(59)/13/Rev.1 was adopted.

Measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety (agenda item 14)

26. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.3 was adopted.

Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities (agenda item 16)

27. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the General Conference adopted the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.7 as follows: "A. Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities"; and "B. Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy".

Promotion of efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA decision making process (agenda item 22)

28. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the General Conference took note of the report of the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

Amendment to Article VI of the Statute (agenda item 23)

29. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft decision set out in document GC(59)/L.6 was adopted.

Elections to the Agency's Staff Pension Committee (agenda item 24)

30. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, Mr Che Van Haastrecht of Canada was elected as a member and Mr Basit Akindele of Nigeria and Mr Husham Ahmed of Pakistan were elected as alternate members of the Agency's Staff Pension Committee.

Personnel (agenda item 25)

31. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.5 was adopted.

20. Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(59)/15; GC(59)/L.1)

32. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that his country supported the Agency's work in the area of safeguards, pursuant to Article III of the NPT.

33. The General Conference and the NPT Review Conferences had given high priority to the accession of all States in the Middle East to the NPT and to 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 adopted a resolution on the Middle East because the international community had realized that the continued existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the region undermined the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime and the credibility of the safeguards regime as a whole.

34. Egypt was submitting the draft resolution with a view to reaffirming the international community's commitment to supporting the Agency, which could play a pivotal role in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

35. Averting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East depended primarily on the international community assuming its responsibilities and addressing all issues relating 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 in the region regarding the seriousness of the international community and the credibility of the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the principles that they advocated. The positive message thus transmitted would convince States that had acceded to the NPT and placed their nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards that they had made the right choice. It would demonstrate that the international community, in particular the five nuclear-weapon States, were complying with their obligations and taking a firm stand against States that opposed nuclear disarmament and refused to accede to any nuclear non-proliferation agreement or to apply nuclear safeguards.

36. The text of the draft resolution was similar to that of the resolution adopted by the General Conference at the 58th regular session. A delicate balance had been sought with a view to reaching a consensus on its content so that Member States would shoulder their responsibility to ensure that all nuclear facilities in the Middle East were placed under the Agency's safeguards regime.

37. Mr NAJAFI (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 UNGA and UNSC 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."

38. NAM welcomed the conclusion by its members party to the NPT of 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 in the Middle East except 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.

39. NAM also regretted 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.

40. In the belief that all Member States should cooperate in rectifying an unacceptable situation, NAM called on them to participate actively in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East as a priority.

41. 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 requested the Director General to continue to brief Member States regularly on those efforts.

42. 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 WMDs. 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 UN Secretary-General, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation to convene the conference without further delay in order to avoid a negative impact on the credibility of the NPT, on the preparations for the NPT Review Conference, on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole and on the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

43. NAM States Parties to the NPT regretted that the 2015 NPT Review Conference, despite intensive consultations, had not reached an agreement on the draft final document. That might have a negative impact on the NPT regime.

44. NAM requested the Director General to continue to consult Member States on arrangements conducive to achieving the objective of the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

45. NAM, which was fully committed to cooperating with the Director General and supporting his efforts in implementing resolution GC(58)/RES/16, endorsed the draft resolution submitted by Egypt.

46. Ms ZAFARY-ODIZ (Israel), noting that a draft resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East had been submitted to the General Conference each year for several years, said that the sponsor had avoided any dialogue with Israel on the content of the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.1.

47. 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 violated it repeatedly. Accession to the NPT was not a goal in itself: calls for universal accession had to be judged in the light of the refusal by several Arab States and the Islamic Republic of Iran to recognize the State of Israel and their open and explicit calls for its destruction.

48. 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 a zone free of all WMDs there. The current regrettable situation in the Middle East and the multiple threats, conventional and non-conventional alike, justified Israel's approach.

49. Israel believed that the path to a zone free of all WMDs in the Middle East should begin with confidence-building measures and trust among the States of the region through direct dialogue.

Without that, it would be impossible to initiate a gradual process and to build consensus on the necessary measures involving wider regional peace and security interests.

50. Israel was committed to sincere and open dialogue with neighbouring countries on all regional security-related issues. It was unfortunate that the draft resolution did not refer, as a minimum, to the recent multilateral effort made in Switzerland.

51. Israel remained true to its principles concerning direct dialogue with Members of the region based on a broad agenda of regional security issues. Israel was willing to contribute to a renewed effort in the direction already established by the facilitator of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

52. While many provisions of the draft resolution merited the objection of Israel, in an effort to bridge the gap between major differences and with a view to a possible future regional process, her country would limit itself to voting against operative paragraph 2 and abstaining on the resolution as a whole. She therefore requested that separate votes be taken on paragraph 2 and on the draft resolution as a whole.

53. Mr ESHRAGH JAHROMI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that 40 years had passed since the introduction of the Iranian initiative for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The resolutions on that subject, which had been repeatedly adopted without a vote by the United Nations General Assembly since 1980, reflected the importance of the issue in the volatile region of the Middle East.

54. By acceding to the NPT and placing its peaceful nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, Iran had demonstrated its determination to help to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

55. 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 threatened both security and political power. Iran had proposed, and was committed to, the idea of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons. Having ratified all major treaties banning WMDs, Iran was determined to comply with its international commitments. Universal accession to the NPT and the application of Agency safeguards would effectively ensure the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone 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.

56. It was regrettable that, in spite of decades-long global efforts, no progress had been made towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone 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 doubtful that such a zone could be established in the near future.

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

58. As stated in the Director General's report set out in document GC(59)/15, all States of the Middle East region except 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 its illegal nuclear programme, without any Agency verification, and had not even declared

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

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

60. The unilateral decision of one of the conveners to postpone, for fictitious reasons, the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs had been intended to protect 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. Some had resorted to such tactics as organizing ostentatious consultations outside the UN framework and raising irrelevant and unwarranted issues in order to shift the emphasis from the objectives originally agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

61. It had been fully expected that specific steps for the prompt implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action would be agreed at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. It was a matter of deep concern and disappointment for the international community that three State Parties — two depositaries of the treaty and Canada — had blocked the consensus at the conference purely to safeguard the interests of a non-party, Israel, which had endangered the peace and security of the region by pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons programme and by not heeding the international call to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

62. Given such realities, the only way to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the universal application of Agency safeguards in the region was for the international community to exert and maintain sustained pressure on the Israeli regime in order to compel it to accede to the NPT promptly and unconditionally as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all of its nuclear activities and installations under Agency safeguards. Accordingly, the final documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences had recalled the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. That approach should be further pursued in the Agency, including through the adoption of the resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East at the General Conference.

63. Mr SANTANA (Cuba) welcomed the Arab Group's initiative to include the item in the agenda of the General Conference. It was a sensitive subject that had serious negative implications for regional and international peace and security.

64. Israel should accede without delay to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and place all of its nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards system. It was the only non-NPT State Party in the Middle East and had not stated that it intended to accede to the treaty.

65. In order to turn the Middle East into a zone of peace and security for all, real political will and the elimination of double standards on nuclear issues were required. It was inconsistent for certain countries to allege that States in the region were failing to comply with safeguards, while those countries continued to provide Israel with nuclear-related assistance and were attempting to prevent the adoption of a resolution calling on Israel to accede to the NPT. Those countries should be consistent in their approach to the issue, forgo their permissive stance towards Israel and demand the destruction, under international control, of its nuclear arsenal.

66. Cuba supported the draft resolution because the issue was relevant to the Agency and should therefore be the subject of analysis and discussion both by the Board of Governors and by the General Conference.

67. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country supported all initiatives aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In 2003 it had sought to submit a draft resolution to the Security Council on behalf of the Arab States to achieve that objective. Syria believed that the elimination of WMDs, particularly nuclear weapons, was a prerequisite for security and stability in the region. However, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone did not release the region's nuclear-weapon States from their legal obligations; on the contrary, it enhanced the importance of expediting compliance with those obligations and of eliminating all categories of nuclear weapons.

68. Referring to the statements in the Director General's report contained in document GC(59)/15 that all States in the Middle East region except Israel were NPT Parties and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards, and that Israel considered that Agency safeguards and all other regional security issues could not be addressed in isolation from the creation of stable regional security conditions, he said that Israel's argument reflected its Government's lack of political will to make peace and its wish to preserve and reinforce its military hegemony in the region. Successive Israeli governments had failed to respond positively to genuine international peace efforts and continued to pursue an aggressive policy of occupation, settlement-building, ethnic cleansing and Judaization of Jerusalem. Those who sought to achieve peace should take practical steps to establish their credibility.

69. Through their dilatory conduct, Israel and its allies had obstructed the implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference recommendation on the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs. It had been clear from the beginning of the 2015 Review Conference that Israel's allies were determined to ensure its failure so that Israel could remain outside the non-proliferation regime. Their conduct had doomed all international efforts to hold a conference that would lay the foundations for a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. It had prevented the 2015 Review Conference from drawing up a five-year action plan requiring implementation of the three pillars of the NPT and of the Middle East resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. While the Arab States had demonstrated their willingness to take practical steps to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone, premeditated despotic policies had undermined all attempts to find solutions for security and stability in the Middle East.

70. It was high time for Israel to join the non-proliferation regime, to place all of its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards as a non-nuclear State and to eliminate its nuclear arsenal, which violated UNSC resolution 487 (1981), UNGA resolution A/RES/69/78 of 2014 on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 of 2009 on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which called on Israel to accede to the NPT.

71. Mr LI Junjie (China) said that his country had always supported NPT principles and objectives and was strongly committed to strengthening the treaty's universality, effectiveness and authority. The nuclear issue in the Middle East was complex and sensitive in the context of the NPT review process. It was regrettable that no positive progress had been achieved in that regard for many years. The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs was conducive to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, easing regional tensions and enhancing regional peace and security. China called on all parties to strengthen dialogue and consultation, seek solutions actively and convene the international conference on the establishment of such a zone as early as possible. It expected the Agency and the Director General to continue to play an active role in that regard.

72. All States in the Middle East should accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States at the earliest possible date and place all nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards and supervision, earnestly fulfilling their NPT obligations.

73. 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(59)/L.1.

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

75. Georgia, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

76. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Honduras, 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, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, 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, Vanuatu, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel.

Abstaining: Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Haiti, India, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Togo, United States of America.

77. There were 126 votes in favour and 1 against, with 13 abstentions. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was adopted.

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

79. 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(59)/L.1.

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

81. Ghana, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

82. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, 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, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, 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, Vanuatu, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Burundi, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Haiti, Israel, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Togo, United States of America.

83. There were 126 votes in favour and none against, with 14 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

84. Mr ENSHER (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation supported much of the content of the draft resolution but had abstained on account of the manner in which it was worded.

85. The United States of America strongly supported the goal of a Middle East free of WMDs and their means of delivery, and remained committed to the aim of convening a conference on the subject. It had engaged in intensive efforts for five years with the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United Nations and the Government of Finland with a view to facilitating five rounds of regional dialogue on arrangements for the proposed conference. His country continued to believe that meaningful progress had thus been made and it noted that Israel had sent high-level officials to participate in all five meetings and had stated its willingness to attend the proposed conference once consensus had been reached on the agenda. The United States of America encouraged the regional parties to resume direct negotiations without delay on arrangements for the proposed conference so that further progress could be made towards the shared objective.

86. Ms YAMIN (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country had voted in favour of the draft resolution in order to reaffirm its commitment to the ongoing endeavours to establish a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East in order to promote peace and stability in the region and contribute to nuclear disarmament. Recent tragic events in the Middle East had highlighted the need to establish such a zone without further delay. Venezuela was concerned that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had failed to adopt the final document on account of the

unwillingness of three States to address the issue in depth and their efforts to protect a State that was not party to the NPT.

87. It was regrettable that the resolution had not been adopted by consensus. The international community should recognize the vital importance of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and take vigorous action to achieve that goal at the earliest possible date.

88. Mr BAILEY (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country continued to urge all Member States that had not already done so to sign and promptly bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. It had consistently supported the establishment of a verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

89. Canada was disappointed that wording had been introduced into the resolution at recent sessions of the General Conference that prevented its adoption by consensus. Such wording unhelpfully politicized a forum that had historically taken a more technical approach to such issues. Moreover, the resolution did not address serious non-compliance issues in the Middle East, thus ignoring a critical aspect of the application of safeguards. Canada could not support a resolution that did not address such fundamental concerns and made erroneous connections between NPT ratification and safeguards applications. It had therefore abstained on paragraph 2 and on the resolution as a whole.

90. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt) welcomed the Member States' near unanimous support for the resolution.

91. He was seriously concerned, however, at the decision by the United States of America, an NPT depositary State, to abstain in the vote on paragraph 2, which called on all States in the region to accede to the treaty. Depositary States bore a special responsibility to promote the universality of the NPT. He wondered which substantive element had led the United States of America to abstain on the resolution as a whole. The same delegation had blocked the adoption of the final document at the NPT Review Conference in May 2015.

92. The representative of the United States of America had claimed that his country strongly supported the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and was committed to the convening of a conference on the subject. Yet despite the determined efforts of the conference facilitator, Mr Laajava of Finland, the conference had not been held in 2012 on account of the attitude of one of the so-called convenors. It was a source of great concern when an NPT depositary State impeded progress towards the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Moreover, when Member States argued that accession to the NPT should not constitute a goal in itself, one could but conclude that the entire NPT regime was facing a serious problem.

93. Mr COUNTRYMAN (United States of America) said that his country had not been responsible for the failure to adopt a final document at the NPT Review Conference. He was willing to provide an accurate account of the proceedings to any interested party and to identify which delegation had been responsible for the failure to reach agreement.

94. Mr SHAMAA (Egypt) informed delegations that had not attended the NPT Review Conference that a video of the entire session could be viewed on the UN website.

21. Israeli nuclear capabilities

(GC(59)/1/Add.1; GC(59)/21; GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1)

95. The PRESIDENT said that item 21 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(59)/1/Add.1 and to document GC(59)/21.

96. Mr AL-MANSOURI (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, introduced the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1. The Group regretted that nuclear programmes and installations in the Middle East remained outside the international safeguards regime. The international community had failed to take effective action to address the issue despite repeated warnings by the Arab Group of the risks posed by Israeli nuclear programmes, which were the only unsafeguarded programmes in the Middle East.

97. The Arab Group again called on Member States and the international community to abide by their legal and moral obligations to address the risks posed by such nuclear programmes. States had incurred such obligations under the NPT, and the international community had undertaken to work to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East.

98. Accordingly, and in view of the failure of the NPT Review Conference to agree on a final document, the Arab States reaffirmed their determination to submit the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which called on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. In making those demands, the Arab Group was shouldering its responsibility to promote regional and international peace and stability and was acting on its commitment to build a world free of nuclear weapons and free of the nuclear threat to future generations.

99. Mr ESHRAGH JAHROMI (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that NAM 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.

100. 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 region except Israel were party to the NPT and had undertaken to accept comprehensive Agency safeguards.

101. 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 UNGA and UNSC resolutions.

102. 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 repeated calls on Israel to subject those facilities and activities to comprehensive Agency safeguards.

103. 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.

104. Member States should cooperate in rectifying an unacceptable situation and in achieving the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East. Implementation of resolution

GC(53)/RES/17 would be a first step to that end. 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.

105. NAM reiterated its call for a total and complete prohibition of 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.

106. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, in a letter to the Director General (reproduced in Annex 2 to 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 before 1994 on South Africa's nuclear capabilities had referenced UNGA resolutions on relations between Israel and South Africa and had strongly condemned the extensive collaboration between Israel and the then racist regime of South Africa, especially in military and nuclear fields, in defiance of UNGA and UNSC resolutions.

107. Mr ESHRAGH JAHROMI (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 of 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 condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear weapons and had reiterated their support for the efforts of the Arab Group in Vienna to keep the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities under consideration by the Agency's General Conference.

108. Since 1982, the General Conference had in several resolutions called on Israel to accede promptly to the NPT and place all of 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 of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. However, ignoring legitimate international concerns, Israel had continued to advance its nuclear capabilities with the assistance of certain 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.

109. He called for a total and complete prohibition of 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. Iran was particularly concerned that Israeli scientists were being granted access to the nuclear facilities of certain nuclear-weapon States, while nuclear scientists of States party to the NPT were being assassinated.

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

111. Until the international community called for Israel's unconditional accession to the NPT and the placement of all of 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. His delegation

therefore supported the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1 and encouraged other Member States to do so.

112. Mr DANIELI (Israel) regretted that the agenda item had been tabled once again at 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 and diverted attention from the real problems facing the Agency and the non-proliferation regime.

113. The negative Arab initiative under discussion disregarded Israel's forthcoming approach to regional arms control and security, including WMDs. That approach had been amply demonstrated by Israel's close and constructive engagement in the five rounds of multilateral consultations facilitated by Mr Laajava of Finland from October 2013 to June 2014. Those consultations, boycotted altogether by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, had been brought to an end by certain Arab States in a misguided rejection of the idea of consensual agreement on a conference in Helsinki. Arab ill will had been repeatedly manifested at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, the first Review Conference for many years in which Israel had participated as an observer in the hope of regaining the momentum of regional dialogue. Israel's constructive approach to the genuine goals of the non-proliferation regime and its regional dimensions had been clearly elaborated in its national papers submitted to the Review Conference.

114. The Arab Group's intensive efforts to advance the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1 negated every principle of trust and confidence among regional States. The very idea of isolating Israel by means of a resolution contradicted the logic of regional dialogue, which should be taking place despite, or because of, the fast deteriorating situation in the Middle East region. Regrettably, Israel's Arab neighbours continued to choose the path of condemning and singling out Israel in every possible international arena. A vote against the adoption of the draft resolution was a vote for regional dialogue based on trust and confidence. Adoption of the draft resolution was bound to harm the Agency and its credibility.

115. 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. They would also send a clear message that direct dialogue among all regional States was the only way forward to securing agreement on any security or arms control arrangements.

116. He requested that the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1 be put to a roll-call vote.

117. Mr BADDOURA (Lebanon) said that Israel was clearly unwilling to accede to the NPT and to engage seriously in international efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Its attitude seemed to be based on the assumption that, by remaining outside the NPT, unlike other States in the Middle East, it would preserve an overwhelming strategic advantage in the region. Israel ceaselessly manoeuvred and fabricated baseless justifications in order to mask its true intentions.

118. It was therefore odd to find Israel levelling charges against some States in the region and professing its concern about nuclear non-proliferation, although its own nuclear record had been full of serious transgressions for several decades. As time had passed, the scale of the transgressions accompanying the development of Israel's clandestine nuclear weapon programme had been well established. For instance, Israel had obtained prohibited nuclear material by illegal means and had assisted another State in developing a clandestine nuclear military programme. Moreover, it was quite likely that Israel had conducted a prohibited nuclear test in the 1970s.

119. Israel's claim that the non-proliferation regime could not achieve its goals in the Middle East undermined the regime's credibility. It implied that the entire world was mistaken in its support for the regime and that only one party was aware of the truth. Israel persistently invoked the troubled circumstances and crises in the Middle East in support of the barrier that it had raised against the universality of the NPT and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Oppressive Israeli practices against the Palestinian people, assaults against its neighbours and occupation of parts of their territory were exacerbating the crisis, spreading chaos and undermining efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace.

120. The circumstances that had led to the adoption of the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities in 2009 had since escalated. Israel's continued policy of nuclear opacity was a matter of great concern to its neighbours because it demonstrated that country's ability to do as it pleased, while enjoying immunity and a lack of accountability at the international level. The region was, moreover, at risk of sliding into an arms race with dire consequences. There was therefore a greater need in the Middle East than ever before for positive initiatives to ease the tensions of the turbulent situation and enhance the prospects for peace.

121. The postponement of the 2012 conference and the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference had come as a great shock. If those mistakes were not corrected, they could put the future of the NPT in jeopardy.

122. A vote in favour of the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 would be a step in the right direction and would persuade people that the international community was taking serious action to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The draft resolution highlighted the risks faced by everyone, including Israel and its people. Its adoption would bring pressure to bear on Israel to abide by international law, international standards of justice and basic human rights, and to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

123. Ms YAMIN (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her country wished to co-sponsor the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1. Owing to the difficult situation in the Middle East, Israel's accession to the NPT and the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all of its nuclear facilities could no longer be postponed. The situation demanded swift and effective action by the international community to establish an NWFZ in order to avert a greater tragedy. In order to achieve that objective, however, an impartial approach must be taken, requiring the same level of commitment from the States involved. The urgency of the situation meant that all parties must have the same rights and obligations and that privileges must cease. She urged Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

124. Mr SANTANA (Cuba) welcomed the initiative taken by the Arab Group to place the important issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference. It was a sensitive issue that had serious negative implications for regional and international peace and security.

125. Israel should accede without delay to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and place all of its nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards system. It was the only non-NPT State Party in the Middle East and had not stated that it intended to accede to the treaty. Its failure to do so, despite repeated demands by the peoples of the region, was a serious obstacle to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone would constitute a significant step towards achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and would boost the peace process in the Middle East region.

126. In order to turn the Middle East into a zone of peace and security for all, real political will and the elimination of double standards on nuclear issues were required. It was inconsistent for certain countries to allege that States in the region were failing to comply with safeguards, while those

countries continued to provide Israel with nuclear-related assistance and were attempting to prevent the adoption of a resolution calling on Israel to accede to the NPT. Those countries should be consistent in their approach to the issue, forgo their permissive stance towards Israel and demand the destruction, under international control, of its nuclear arsenal.

127. Cuba would once again support the adoption of the draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which was relevant to the Agency and should therefore be the subject of analysis and discussion both by the Board of Governors and by the General Conference.

128. Mr AL HUSSEINI (Jordan) said that his country attached great importance to the comprehensive safeguards regime, which provided invaluable support for international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to limit the use of nuclear energy to peaceful applications.

129. Jordan drew attention to the scale of the threat posed to stability in the Middle East region by a nuclear programme that was not subject to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime. It underscored the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all of its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards with a view to ensuring the universality of the treaty in the region and facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Such action would contribute to peace and security and create an incentive for States to focus on economic and social development.

130. He called on all Member States to support the draft resolution, which reflected their moral obligations and responsibilities.

131. Mr RUDDYARD (Indonesia) said that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remained high on his country's agenda. The ultimate aim was general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Furthermore, efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation should be made in parallel to nuclear disarmament efforts. The universality of the NPT was an important element in that regard.

132. Indonesia strongly supported the speedy establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant UNSC and UNGA consensus resolutions. The establishment of such a zone would enhance peace and stability in the region and contribute to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

133. Allowing a country to develop nuclear weapons capabilities outside the NPT and to keep its nuclear material and facilities outside the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime would constitute a betrayal of the commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation in general and, in particular, the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, thereby endangering the peace and stability of the region. Indonesia therefore supported the draft resolution and called on all Member States to do likewise.

134. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) reiterated his country's concern about the international community's failure to take any effective action against Israel's numerous serious transgressions, such as the occupation of Palestinian territory and parts of Syria and Lebanon, and the perpetration of oppressive and terrorist practices against their inhabitants. Syria was surprised that the international community had not taken any serious measures against Israel's increasing nuclear capabilities, which were not subject to international control and constituted a violation of the non-proliferation regime.

135. Israel continued to develop its nuclear capabilities with the overt support of States Parties to the NPT, which thus ignored dozens of relevant international resolutions, such as UNSC resolution 487 (1981), UNGA resolution A/RES/69/78 of 2014 on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 of 2009 on Israeli nuclear

capabilities, which called on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all of its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

136. Syria urged the international community to give due attention to the agenda item and to vote in favour of the draft resolution because of the danger of allowing Israel to remain outside the non-proliferation regime. It was high time to take vigorous steps to compel Israel to abide by relevant international resolutions, first and foremost by acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear State, placing all of its nuclear installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards and eliminating its arsenal of nuclear weapons. Such action should be taken without the application of double standards and should be subject to UN control.

137. Although Israel would continue, without the shadow of a doubt, to flout all international resolutions with the support of its allies, some of which were nuclear-weapon States that applied flagrant double standards, Syria hoped that the General Conference would adopt a resolution that demonstrated the Agency's credibility and neutrality.

138. Mr ESTRADA ROMÁN (Nicaragua) said that his country supported initiatives designed to analyse Israel's nuclear capacities in depth. The draft resolution was therefore a step in the right direction. Nicaragua had on previous occasions stated its commitment to the equal application of international law to all countries. Diplomacy in good faith should triumph over war.

139. Despite the positive results that dialogue and diplomacy had produced in the Middle East with regard to nuclear non-proliferation, one country persisted in its refusal to cooperate with the rest of the world. Israel, the only non-NPT State in the region, was also the only State in the region that had a nuclear programme outside the scrutiny of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. He questioned Israel's right to do so, noting that it possessed nuclear weapons, illegally occupied Palestinian territory and pursued a totally clandestine nuclear programme. He considered that the situation should be condemned and he called for equal treatment for all States, with no double standards in that regard.

140. Lastly, he stressed that humanity currently faced an arms race in which it was threatened by qualitative and quantitative improvements in nuclear weapons, supported by technologies which fell outside the scope of international treaties and which were of unprecedented dimensions in a complex global geopolitical context. Subcritical tests were nothing new, but it had become technologically possible to modernize and expand nuclear arsenals without conducting a single explosive test. Nicaragua called on the Agency to face up to its responsibilities for non-proliferation in order to continue to fulfil its purpose of promoting atoms for peace and development.

141. Mr AL-MANSOURI (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, requested that the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1 be put to a roll-call vote.

142. The PRESIDENT invited the Conference to proceed to a roll-call vote on the draft resolution set out in document GC(59)/L.4/Rev.1, as requested by the representatives of Israel and Qatar.

143. Libya, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

144. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian

Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, 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, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Abstaining:

Angola, Argentina, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Holy See, India, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.

145. There were 43 votes in favour and 61 against, with 33 abstentions. The draft resolution was rejected.

146. Ms ZAFARY-ODIZ (Israel) said that her country welcomed the positive outcome of the vote, in which delegations had demonstrated their rejection of attempts to divert the General Conference and the Agency from their real challenges and substantive tasks. The result was a clear message that the only way to achieve regional security in the Middle East was through direct dialogue and consensus among all States of the region. Regional security could be built through trust and confidence, not by avoiding challenges and singling out Israel. 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, in a renewed effort taking into account the clear lessons learned in other regions that had successfully lived up to their people's expectations regarding regional security and arms control.

147. Mr COUNTRYMAN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, since it would have contributed nothing to a goal that everyone shared, which was to make progress on the creation of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and WMDs. The draft resolution's approach was that of rhetoric, declarations and pressure, all of which could have a role in diplomacy but none of which had advanced actual dialogue among regional States, which was necessary to achieve the aforementioned goal. His country and its partners worldwide were committed to that goal and were willing to work to achieve it not only in large forums but also in the type of small forums where original ideas could be exchanged. That form of diplomacy had produced breakthroughs on every other difficult topic faced by the world, and should be attempted in the Middle East as well. There were courageous and creative diplomats in every country in the Middle East, and he looked forward to working with them in an effort to achieve that worthy goal that was shared by all.

148. Mr VINHAS (Brazil), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country's abstention did not stem from disagreement about the overarching issues. Brazil firmly supported the universalization of the NPT and had subscribed to the reaffirmation by the 2000 and the 2010 NPT Review Conferences

of the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and placing all of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards.

149. He deeply regretted that the 2015 Review Conference had not agreed on a final document, despite the efforts made by States Parties and the Presidency to reach a successful outcome. That failure had resulted from differences over the convening of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs.

150. There had been some positive developments relating to the Middle East and the Agency's work, namely the JCPOA and the road map, which could contribute significantly to reducing conflicts and tension in the region and bore witness to the efficacy of diplomacy and negotiations in resolving difficult disputes and creating the basis for sustainable peace.

151. His country appealed to all stakeholders to resume consultations and intensify efforts to convene the conference. That issue could not be neglected, otherwise the Parties would be sending a troubling signal that could call into question the commitments undertaken in connection with the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and with subsequent Review Conferences, thereby eroding the credibility of the treaty itself.

152. Mr SRISAMOOT (Thailand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country's abstention did not mean that it did not agree to the substance of the draft resolution, which contained many important elements that were consistent with his country's principled position on and common aspiration for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. He sympathized with the sentiment expressed therein regarding the negative repercussions of the recently concluded NPT Review Conference. The credibility of the NPT could be maintained by redoubling efforts, and he called on the parties involved to restart dialogue on the Middle East zone. He had abstained in the hope of helping to maintain a much needed positive atmosphere.

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

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

155. The EU reaffirmed its support for the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and recalled the affirmation of its goals and objectives by the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. The EU considered that the 1995 resolution would remain valid until its goals and objectives had been achieved. It therefore deeply regretted that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs had not been convened.

156. The EU maintained the view that the objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference could be achieved sustainably only through dialogue and confidence-building among all stakeholders. It called on all States to renew their efforts in that regard. A lasting solution was conditional on all States in the region entering freely into arrangements. The EU regretted that the draft resolution had been submitted despite its repeated calls on Arab States to refrain from doing so.

157. 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 Parties to the NPT to comply fully with its provisions and with all relevant UNSC 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 action would make a crucial contribution to an overall improvement in the security situation and confidence in the region.

158. 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. Japan had therefore supported the resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, which had called on all States in the region to accede to the NPT.

159. It was regrettable that the draft final document had not been adopted at the 2015 NPT Review Conference owing to the difficulties surrounding the organization of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs. Efforts had been made among the countries concerned through informal consultations in recent years, however, and efforts were under way to reinvigorate the dialogue. The adoption of the draft resolution would not have contributed to the collective confidence-building efforts in the region.

160. Japan had supported the resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the whole Middle East region and had considered a resolution that made pointed reference to Israel only to be unnecessary.

161. Japan 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 WMDs at the earliest possible opportunity.

162. Mr FOO (Singapore), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had consistently supported 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 did not signify a departure from those principles.

163. Singapore had consistently supported efforts to achieve genuine and lasting peace in a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons through open, genuine and constructive dialogue involving all relevant parties. Singapore regretted that States Parties could not all agree on a way forward for the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. He hoped, however, that all of the relevant parties could continue to strive constructively to convene the conference as soon as possible.

164. Ms GEELS (New Zealand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country had voted against the draft resolution primarily because there had been insufficient time between the circulation of the draft text and the vote to reflect fully and consult on the changes to the text and their potential impact on New Zealand's voting position.

165. 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 pursued under the auspices of the NPT.

166. She regretted the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to agree on a final document, including further steps towards establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. Her country would continue to give serious consideration to changing its vote on the issue, should a similar draft resolution be tabled in 2016.

167. Mr AL-MANSOURI (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, regretted that the draft resolution had not secured the majority required for adoption. The Arab Group thanked Member States that had voted in favour of the draft resolution and hoped that Member States that had voted against it, abstained or were absent would reconsider their position and support the draft resolution, the implementation of relevant international resolutions, the resolutions of the Agency's Board of Governors and the resolutions of the NPT Review Conferences.

168. The Arab Group had decided to continue to submit the draft resolution at future sessions of the General Conference, regardless of the outcome of the vote, because it addressed an issue of crucial importance to regional and international security and to the universal application of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards regime.

169. The Arab Group reaffirmed its commitment to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. It would continue to pursue that goal at many levels and it hoped that all Member States would reach an understanding of the lofty objectives underlying the establishment of such a zone and that they would support the Arab Group's endeavours.

170. Mr AL HINAI (Oman) was saddened and disappointed by the number of Member States that had voted against the draft resolution, especially since many of them opposed the proliferation of WMDs and supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. When it came to the vote, however, they had doubtless succumbed to pressure and blackmail.

171. Oman was very much aware of the threat posed by WMDs, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East and would therefore continue to seek ways and means of achieving their elimination. All States that supported security and stability in the Middle East and the world as a whole were jointly responsible for achieving that lofty objective.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.