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President: Mr FARHANE (Morocco)

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¹ In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference decided that delegations so wishing could attend in a virtual manner using the Interprefy IT platform or make their statements by means of a pre-recorded video.

² GC(64)/19.

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Abbreviations used in this record

AU-PATTEC	African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
BSL	biosafety level
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
EU	European Union
G-77	Group of Seventy-Seven
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	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
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
PMO	Policy-Making Organ
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
VETLAB	Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

21. Israeli nuclear capabilities (GC(64)/1/Add.1; GC(64)/14)

1. The PRESIDENT said that item 21 had been included in the agenda at the request of Arab States that were members of the Agency. It was covered by an explanatory memorandum contained in document GC(64)/1/Add.1 and by document GC(64)/14.

2. Ms MAMMADOVA (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of NAM, said that the Group strongly believed that stability could not be achieved in a region where a continuing massive imbalance in military capabilities, in particular owing to the possession of nuclear weapons, allowed one party to threaten its neighbours and others in the region.

3. In its conviction that the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East would be a positive step towards global nuclear disarmament, NAM reiterated its support for the establishment of such a zone in accordance with the relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

4. It noted with concern that the selective approach to the issue of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East had undermined the viability of the Agency's safeguards regime and had resulted in the continued and dangerous presence of unsafeguarded Israeli nuclear facilities and activities, despite repeated calls on Israel to place them under comprehensive Agency safeguards. All Member States should cooperate to rectify that unacceptable situation and achieve the universality of comprehensive Agency safeguards in the Middle East, as a first step by implementing resolution GC(53/RES/17).

5. Mr KÜNTZLE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the EU, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and San Marino aligned themselves with his statement.

6. Welcoming the Arab States' decision not to table a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities at the current session of the General Conference, the EU was disappointed, however, that the issue had again been included on the agenda. It was a divisive political issue that should not affect the work of a technical organization such as the Agency. The EU remained convinced that a consensus approach, as set out in the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, was the only way to make progress towards the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

7. Ms AL-HADID (Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that for more than four decades the Arab States had striven to voice their concerns about nuclear material, programmes and facilities that were not under international safeguards and thus posed a threat to their security and stability. The Arab States had chosen to join the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime rather than a regional arms race that could be disastrous for international peace and security.

8. With a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation among the international community, the Arab States had acceded to the NPT, believing that all other Parties were seriously committed to achieving universality of the Treaty and mutual security for all States without discrimination, by implementing clear obligations concerning verification and monitoring. They welcomed Palestine's signing of a CSA with the Agency, following its accession to the NPT in early 2015. Such a development would further bolster efforts to strengthen regional and international peace, safety and security.

9. As Israel was still the only State in the region that refused to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear programmes and facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, the Arab States had

appealed to the NPT Review Conferences, the Agency, and the UN General Assembly and Security Council to take action to encourage Israel's accession to the NPT and to ensure compliance with the Agency's norms and regulations in furtherance of international peace and security.

10. In all those forums, the Arab States had repeatedly said that they would strive to rid the Middle East of WMDs through an initiative to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, as a comprehensive approach to achieving security for all States in the region. The adoption by various international bodies of dozens of resolutions supporting that initiative had regrettably proven to be merely rhetorical, owing to the lack of international will to ensure their implementation. Among them was the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East adopted at that year's NPT Review and Extension Conference, part of the deal that had led to the indefinite extension of the NPT. The Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had adopted a specific mechanism to begin implementing the 1995 Resolution. Furthermore, the General Conference had adopted a number of resolutions since the 1980s calling on Israel to accede to the NPT, the most recent being resolution GC(53)/RES/17 on Israeli nuclear capabilities, adopted in 2009.

11. As implementation of the 1995 Resolution was a top priority, its co-sponsors had a responsibility to ensure that it was achieved. Attempts by any party to delay its implementation must be rejected. The Arab States emphasized adherence to the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, especially those concerning the Middle East.

12. Israel had categorically refused to implement the aforementioned resolutions, deliberately debasing the NPT and describing it as ineffective in the Middle East. The country's refusal to accede to the NPT constituted a threat to regional and global peace and security, above all in the light of its development of nuclear weapons, the existence of which had been acknowledged by numerous Israeli officials and discussed in many international reports.

13. The unprecedented protection certain international powers provided to Israel, enabling it to flout international law without fear of being called to account, had undermined and weakened the global non-proliferation regime. While the international community inexplicably remained silent, Israel extracted concessions and received technical and military support that was denied to NPT States Parties.

14. It was critically important for Israel to accede to the NPT because of the significant security and safety risks stemming from the lack of Agency oversight over Israel's ageing nuclear facilities, in particular the Dimona nuclear reactor, which had the potential to cause a nuclear accident with catastrophic repercussions for the entire region.

15. The Group considered that such treatment of an issue that adversely affected security and stability in the Middle East was unacceptable. The Arab States were indignant that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had been scuppered in order to safeguard the interests of a non-party to the NPT. It was a core responsibility of the General Conference to request States to accede to the NPT and to place their nuclear facilities and programmes under comprehensive safeguards; any attempt to stifle such requests undermined the credibility of the NPT and the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes.

16. Faced with continuous attempts to thwart its efforts to achieve regional balance by establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, the Arab Group was continuing consultations on ways to facilitate the successful adoption of a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, and thanked those Member States that had supported the draft resolution at previous sessions. While the Group had refrained from submitting a draft resolution at the current session of the General Conference, that did not mean that no such resolution would be submitted in the future.

17. The international community, in particular the three co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution, should shoulder their responsibilities and support efforts at the Tenth NPT Review Conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East.

18. Mr AZZAM (Lebanon) said that the item had been included on the agenda to shed light on the threat to the Middle East region posed by Israel's nuclear capabilities. It was Lebanon's hope that discussion of the item would encourage Israel to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, in line with the numerous international resolutions on the matter, in particular resolution GC(53)/RES/17 and UN Security Council resolution 487 (1981)

19. Stressing its commitment to the principles of non-proliferation and to harnessing the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, Lebanon noted that all Arab States had acceded to the NPT and accepted Agency safeguards. Rather than guaranteeing security and peace in the Middle East, Israel's nuclear capabilities further undermined confidence-building measures between that country and other States in the region and impeded the establishment of an NWFZ.

20. Lebanon had taken part in the first Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held in New York in 2019 pursuant to UN General Assembly decision 73/546. Welcoming the resulting political declaration and the final report, his country reiterated its support for the completion of the process and called on all States to participate, so as to bolster regional and global security and peace. Lebanon hoped that the outcome would be practical steps towards implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

21. Mr SABBAGH (Syrian Arab Republic) said that for many years Israel had secretly been strengthening its nuclear military capabilities, without international oversight. Certain Western States had provided Israel with the Dimona reactor, which was producing nuclear weapons, materials and technology. Those actions had led to Israel's possession of a massive arsenal of nuclear warheads and the means of delivering them, including ballistic missiles and submarine-launched missiles. The same States also assisted Israel in international forums by diverting attention away from the issue of its nuclear capabilities.

22. In its resolution 487 (1981) the UN Security Council had called on Israel to immediately subject its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards. In General Conference resolution GC(53)/RES/17 Israel had been called on to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Israel had persistently ignored those calls. It was regrettable that several influential States, including nuclear-weapon States, applied flagrant double standards, advocating the strengthening of the NPT all the while turning a blind eye to Israel's nuclear capabilities. The USA had doggedly resisted any international resolution or initiative that would limit Israel's nuclear capabilities, shielding Israel from international oversight.

23. Israel continued to possess nuclear capabilities, remaining outside the framework of the NPT and the CSA, posing a serious threat to the non-proliferation regime. Its rejection of all initiatives to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East, and its refusal to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, undermined regional and international security and stability. Israel was therefore in no position to make accusations of non-compliance with the NPT.

24. The time had come for the international community to take a stand against Israel's dangerous practices. It should make a clear decision and take serious practical steps to compel Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to unconditionally subject all its nuclear facilities to monitoring by the Agency.

25. Ms WOLCOTT (United States of America) said that her country regretted that the item had once again been included on the agenda. Israel had not violated any agreements with the Agency and was a substantial contributor to the Agency's technical work.

26. While it welcomed the Arab Group's decision not to submit a resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, the USA regretted that there continued to be contentious discussions on the issue at the Agency and in other multilateral forums. Many of the statements delivered under the item were counterproductive to the shared goal of a Middle East free of WMDs and their delivery systems. Divisive statements singling out for criticism one State in good standing did nothing to advance shared goals in relation to regional security and arms control. On the contrary, they detracted from the Agency's technical work and perpetuated the deep lack of trust in the region. The USA urged all States in the region to refrain from politically motivated statements and initiatives. Engaging directly with neighbours in an inclusive and cooperative manner to address regional security concerns was the only way to achieve meaningful progress towards the shared goals.

27. Mr ELMOLLA (Egypt) said that his country set much store by the goals of non-proliferation and the universalization of the CSA, the fundamental legal instrument underpinning the Agency's work on verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear materials and facilities.

28. Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards undermined efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, especially as the other States in the region had acceded. The lack of progress towards the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards system, in particular in the Middle East, was disappointing. Efforts must be stepped up — maintaining the status quo would harm the credibility of the non-proliferation regime.

29. In view of the support provided by the Agency to develop the safeguards system, Egypt had hoped that it would give similar priority to the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards system before considering that of the additional protocol. Implementation of the safeguards system was a confidence building measure in the region and an important step towards establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the region.

30. In exchange for approving the indefinite extension of the NPT, participants in the 1995 NPT Review Conference had adopted, by consensus, a resolution calling for the Middle East to be rid of nuclear weapons. Although Egypt and the other Arab States had striven to implement that resolution, no significant progress had been made owing to unjustified resistance. Nevertheless, the persistent efforts of the Arab States to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East had led to a pivotal development, namely the holding of the first Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, in New York in 2019. Expressing its appreciation to all the parties that had participated in and contributed to the success of that conference, over which Jordan had presided, Egypt noted that the places of the two States that had not attended had been left empty to symbolize that their invitation still stood.

31. At a recent meeting of the Board of Governors, some delegations had emphasized that direct regional dialogue was the only means of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Egypt pointed out that States in the region had attempted to hold such dialogue within various frameworks and forums since the 1990s only to be met by an absence of political will and irrational excuses for shunning that noble goal.

32. Israel should reconsider its position and participate in the second conference, due to be held under the presidency of Kuwait. It would be a serious opportunity to hold the direct dialogue that the country had always called for, in order to address all relevant concerns through an inclusive process over which all parties had ownership.

33. With the Tenth NPT Review Conference on the horizon, it was increasingly important to take practical steps towards establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. Progress would contribute to the success of the Review Conference, which required combined efforts to universalize the comprehensive safeguards system, apply it to all nuclear activities in the Middle East and bolster the credibility of the non-proliferation regime.

34. Mr HUSSEN (Iraq) said that, as his Government had stated in various international forums where disarmament was discussed, double standards were practised when applying the principles underpinning the non-proliferation regime to the Middle East. Although the NPT was the cornerstone of the regime, the Israeli entity was alone in the region in not acceding to it — and was allowed to do so with impunity. The 2015 NPT Review Conference had failed as a result of the Israeli entity's refusal to cooperate.

35. Iraq urged the international community to shoulder its moral and political responsibility to persuade the Israeli entity to accede to the NPT so that it would be required to apply the Agency's comprehensive safeguards and enable the Agency to verify and inspect all its nuclear activities. The Israeli entity's accession would be the first step towards building confidence — a goal demanded by the Israeli entity itself — in order to advance the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all WMDs in the Middle East.

36. A Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs was vital for stability in the region. It was equally vital to convene further sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, in accordance with the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan and the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. That would have positive effects, in political and security terms, on the region.

37. Iraq praised the efforts made towards establishing the zone, in particular the first session of the conference for that purpose, held pursuant to UN General Assembly decision 73/546 in 2019 under the presidency of Jordan and the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. While Iraq had been among the participating States, the Israeli entity had continued to give excuses for remaining outside the non-proliferation regime. Affirming its firm support for Kuwait's presidency of the next conference, Iraq looked forward to the participation of all parties in the Middle East.

38. Given the clear justification, Iraq requested that the item remain on the agenda of the Agency's PMOs and that the international community, through its various forums, assume its moral and professional responsibility to implement paragraph 5 of UN Security Council resolution 487, calling on the Israeli entity to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system.

39. Mr ADJI (Indonesia) said that his country believed that the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Furthermore, efforts to achieve nuclear non-proliferation should be made in parallel to those for nuclear disarmament. The universality of the NPT was an important element in that regard.

40. Indonesia strongly supported the speedy establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, in accordance with UN General Assembly and Security Council 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.

41. Indonesia considered that permitting 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 was tantamount to betrayal of the commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, and endangered peace and stability in the region.

42. Ms SÁNCHEZ LORENZO (Cuba) welcomed the Arab Group's initiative to include the item on the agenda of the General Conference once more. It was a sensitive subject with serious implications for regional and international peace and security.

43. She reaffirmed her country's support for the prompt establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs, which would contribute significantly to the peace and security of all the peoples of the region.

44. Israel remained the only country in the Middle East not to have acceded to the NPT, despite the international community's repeated calls to do so. Such inaction posed a serious obstacle to creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East. Establishing such a zone would represent a considerable step towards nuclear disarmament and would contribute to the peace process in the region. It was also essential to comply with all General Conference resolutions on that subject.

45. Transforming the Middle East into a zone of peace and security for all required genuine political will, the elimination of double standards in nuclear-related matters, the rejection of the indulgent attitude towards Israel shown by a number of States and unanimous insistence on the destruction of Israel's nuclear arsenal, under international supervision.

46. Mr GHARIB ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) emphasized that, in ignoring legitimate regional and international concerns regarding the Israeli regime's refusal to accede to the NPT, that regime and its supporters were in deliberate breach of all international regulations. It was regrettable that the NPT was far from being universalized, which posed a serious danger to the integrity and credibility of the arms control and disarmament architecture. Following the devastating failure in 2015 to reach a final agreement at the Review Conference, the 2021 NPT Review Conference would be a litmus test of whether a multilateral approach could be taken to arms control and disarmament.

47. All States in the Middle East except for the Israeli regime were parties to the NPT and had a CSA. The Israeli regime's clandestine nuclear capability, acquired in complete defiance of international law, was a continuing, serious threat to the security and stability of the region and the world. That situation was, furthermore, a pressing reason for States in the region to seek to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East as provided for in the 1995 agreement for the unlimited extension of the NPT. Iran maintained that opposition to a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs — the establishment of which was long overdue — amounted to rejecting any practical steps under the auspices of the United Nations towards establishing such a zone.

48. If anyone developed any sort of nuclear explosive device that should be a cause for alarm to be condemned promptly and without any prejudice or discrimination. All Member States and the Agency must engage constructively to achieve the universality of the NPT and comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East and to end the current unacceptable and unsustainable situation.

49. In the same vein, Iran wished to reiterate that the Israeli regime's swift and unconditional accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and placement of all its nuclear materials, activities and installations under comprehensive safeguards were the only steps that could remedy the current nuclear crisis in the Middle East. As such, the international community must apply sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to take them.

50. In conclusion, he stressed that nuclear weapons posed the most serious threat to security worldwide — including in the Middle East — and that ignoring the facts on the ground in the region did nothing to counter that threat. The legal norms on nuclear disarmament and the prohibition on the proliferation of nuclear weapons therefore had to be upheld.

51. Mr HALL (United Kingdom) said that his country was disappointed that the issue of Israel's nuclear capabilities had again been included in the agenda. By its nature, the issue should not affect the

work of a technical organization such as the Agency. It was his country's long-held view that all processes relating to a zone free of nuclear and all weapons of destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East should be based on consensus and be freely arrived at by all the States of the region.

52. Mr NUSBAUM (Israel) said that some of the discussions had politicized issues that did not belong at the forum of the General Conference. They undermined the Agency's professionalism, excellent capabilities and hard work. It was extremely regrettable that, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, some States were still invoking an agenda item totally unrelated to the General Conference and beyond the scope of the Agency's mandate.

– **Oral report of the Chair of the Committee of the Whole**

53. Mr ALNASSAR (Saudi Arabia), Chair of the Committee of the Whole, reported on the outcome of the Committee's deliberations on agenda items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22 and 23.

54. Under item 10, "The Agency's Financial Statements for 2019", the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/4, entitled "The Agency's Financial Statements for 2019".

55. Under item 11, "The Agency's Budget Update for 2021", the Committee recommended that the Conference approve Regular Budget figures for 2021 of €386 652 113 for the operational portion and €6 199 632 for the capital portion and, accordingly, that it adopt draft resolution A, "Regular Budget Appropriations for 2021", set out in document GC(64)/2; that the Conference approve a target for voluntary contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2021 of €89 558 000 and, accordingly, that it adopt draft resolution B, "Technical Cooperation Fund Allocation for 2021", set out in document GC(64)/2; and that the Conference approve the level of the Working Capital Fund for 2021 at €15 210 000 and, accordingly, that it adopt draft resolution C, "Working Capital Fund for 2021", set out in document GC(64)/2.

56. Under item 12, "Amendment to Article XIV.A of the Statute", the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft decision set out in document GC(64)/L.5.

57. Under item 13, "Scale of assessment of Member States' contributions towards the Regular Budget for 2021", the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution appearing on page 3 of document GC(64)/8.

58. Under item 14, "Nuclear and radiation safety", the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/L.4.

59. Under item 15, "Nuclear security", the Committee recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/L.6.

60. Concerning item 16, "Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities", item 17, "Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications", and item 18, "Strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of Agency safeguards", consensus had been reached in the Committee that all of the draft resolutions tabled under those three items should be forwarded directly to the General Conference for consideration without being discussed by the Committee of the Whole.

61. 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. The expansion of the membership of the Board of Governors, enhancing the role and authority of both the General Conference and the Board, and the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between the two bodies had also been underlined. The importance of the direct engagement and participation of all Member States in the decision making process on issues related to the Agency's work had been emphasized. The relevance and importance of the process under way for the timely ratification of the amendment to Article VI of the Agency's Statute had been referred to, and some views and suggestions had been expressed in that context. The possible use of electronic voting in the proceedings of the General Conference — following the example of the UN General Assembly — had also been raised.

62. Under item 23, "Elections to the Agency's Staff Pension Committee", the Committee recommended that Mr Rahat bin Zaman of the delegation of Bangladesh be elected as a member and that Mr Lucas Martín Mobrıcı of the delegation of Argentina and Ms Stella Mokaya Orina of the delegation of Kenya be elected as alternate members of the Agency's Staff Pension Committee.

63. The PRESIDENT thanked the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole for their work and noted in particular the consensus reached regarding items 16, 17 and 18.

10. The Agency's Financial Statements for 2019

64. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/4 was adopted.

11. The Agency's Budget Update for 2021

65. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, draft resolutions A, B and C set out in document GC(64)/2 were adopted.

12. Amendment to Article XIV.A of the Statute

66. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft decision set out in document GC(64)/L.5 was adopted.

13. Scale of assessment of Member States' contributions towards the Regular Budget for 2021

67. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution on page 3 of document GC(64)/8 was adopted.

14. Nuclear and radiation safety

68. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/L.4 was adopted.

15. Nuclear security

69. As recommended by the Committee of the Whole, the draft resolution set out in document GC(64)/L.6 was adopted.

70. Ms WOLCOTT (United States of America) said that the resolution reflected the international community's commitment to the highest levels of nuclear security and its support for the Agency's efforts to continue to provide nuclear security assistance to Member States, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. In other circumstances, the USA would have preferred a more ambitious text, but it supported the approach taken to the drafting and negotiation process in the current climate.

71. The third International Conference on Nuclear Security, held in February 2020, had highlighted the need for continued focus on improving nuclear security globally, while the COVID-19 pandemic had amply demonstrated the interconnected nature of the international community's efforts, emphasizing the value of cooperation and public confidence and underlining the need to prepare for and respond effectively to security challenges. Any threat against a nuclear facility that was part of a purely peaceful programme, or against other civilian infrastructure, was unacceptable.

72. Mr MANUKYAN (Armenia) said that, after careful consideration of the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the negotiation process, his delegation had decided to refrain from proposing new paragraphs for inclusion in the resolution on nuclear security and to join consensus on the text. Nonetheless, it was missing an important element proposed by Armenia during informal consultations owing to the unprecedented challenges posed to the nuclear security regime by a particular State.

73. Even as it struggled with the COVID-19 pandemic, Armenia had been faced with another major and unprecedented challenge to national and regional security in the form of the threat of a missile attack on its NPP, voiced not by a malicious individual or terrorist organization, but by a State, with the express intent of inflicting a major disaster on the country. The unprecedented threat had been real and credible, as it had been made by the Minister of Defence of the threatening State during the active phase of its familiar offensive against Armenia.

74. Such a threat of nuclear terrorism constituted a grave violation of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, international humanitarian law and the Agency's Statute, presenting a serious challenge to the international architecture of nuclear security and inviting reflection on possible measures to protect Member States' nuclear security. Armenia firmly believed that if the threat were not addressed appropriately, it would jeopardize the development and further promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

75. His country had proposed particular amendments to the resolution on nuclear security in that spirit: not only should the systems, structures and components of peaceful nuclear facilities be strong enough to withstand any possible threat, but international response mechanisms should be developed and further strengthened in order to react swiftly in preventing the recurrence of such threats.

76. The topic required urgent consideration and would remain on Armenia's political agenda. His country reserved the right to address the issue in future deliberations of the General Conference and other relevant international forums.

77. Ms MAMMADOVA (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of her right of reply, said that her country resolutely rejected Armenia's speculation as yet another attempt to mislead the international community, with the obvious purpose of diverting attention from its continued military occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the unlawful use of force, as condemned by the Security Council.

78. The remarks made by her country's Minister of Defence should be viewed in their proper context: the armed attack by Armenia on Azerbaijan of 12 July 2020, when Armenia's armed forces had deliberately targeted the civilian population and civilian objects in Azerbaijan's border districts with indiscriminate artillery fire, causing serious damage to civilian infrastructure such as residential buildings and resulting in deaths and injuries among civilians.

79. According to media reports, Armenia had considered the Mingachevir dam in Azerbaijan a military target. The Office of the President of Azerbaijan had officially clarified that Azerbaijan had never planned attacks on civilian objects. Her country's armed forces never targeted civilians or civilian infrastructure, using force against the Armenian military only when under armed attack and in self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

80. Mr MANUKYAN (Armenia), speaking also in exercise of the right of reply, said that he rejected all the allegations made by the representative of Azerbaijan in her statement.

16. Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities (GC(64)/INF/9 and Supplement; GC(64)/COM.5/L.4 and Add.1 and 2)

81. The PRESIDENT drew attention to a draft resolution on strengthening the Agency's technical cooperation activities, contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.4.

82. Mr PENHA BRASIL (Brazil), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that, in line with the informal agreement reached before the sixty-fourth session of the General Conference, negotiations to prepare a draft resolution on strengthening the Agency's technical cooperation activities had focused on making technical updates to the text of resolution GC(63)/RES/9. As a result, many elements of substantive importance to the Group and other Member States had not been included in the draft text before the General Conference; they would be raised when preparations began for its sixty-fifth session. Noting the spirit of cooperation that had permeated the negotiation process, he thanked all Member States for their flexibility and understanding in the current exceptional circumstances.

83. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.4.

84. It was so decided.

17. Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications

(GC(64)/5; GC(64)/INF/2; GC(64)/COM.5/L.5 and Add.1, L.6 and Add.1, L.7 and Add.1 and 2, L.8, L.9 and Add.1 to 3, L.10 and Add.1 to 4)

85. The PRESIDENT drew attention to a number of documents containing draft resolutions on various aspects of the Agency's activities related to nuclear science and technology, including non-power nuclear applications (GC(64)/COM.5/L.5), support for AU-PATTEC (GC(64)/COM.5/L.6), the ReNuAL project (GC(64)/COM.5/L.9), the ZODIAC project (GC(64)/COM.5/L.10), developing SIT, support for Member States in food and agriculture, and a plan to produce potable water economically using SMRs (GC(64)/COM.5/L.8), and nuclear power applications (GC(64)/COM.5/L.7).

86. Mr BIN ZAKARIA (Malaysia), introducing the draft resolution on non-power applications contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.5, thanked all Member States for their hard work and contribution to the drafting process. In the light of the current circumstances, the draft text was based on the analogous resolution adopted by the General Conference at its sixty-third session with mostly technical updates, notably to paragraphs (j), (s), (gg) and (nn). Mindful of the importance of nuclear education, however, the drafters had included a new paragraph at the end of the preamble to welcome the launch of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme — which aimed to encourage women to pursue a career in nuclear sciences, technology and non-proliferation — and Member States' support for it.

87. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.5.

88. It was so decided.

89. Ms WOLCOTT (United States of America) said that her country celebrated the continued success of the Agency's essential work in developing and promoting the widespread applications of nuclear energy, science and technology for peaceful purposes, as reflected in the resolution just adopted. That said, the wording in the resolution relating to the Paris Agreement and to climate change was without prejudice to the position of the USA, which had submitted its notification of withdrawal from the Agreement. The USA supported efforts to promote economic growth, improve energy security and protect the environment, and the role played by nuclear energy, science and technology.

90. The USA had long been the biggest contributor of voluntary funding to support the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including the applications of nuclear science and technology, through the Agency. Since 2010, it had made voluntary contributions totalling more than \$357 billion to promote peaceful nuclear activities, including \$117 million for the PUI. The Agency was well positioned to support Member States in areas such as pest and disease management, cancer diagnosis and treatment, water resource management, and nuclear energy, safety and security, working with other partners as appropriate.

91. The global COVID-19 pandemic had lent particular importance to Agency projects using nuclear and nuclear-derived technologies to support Member States in the early detection of zoonotic diseases in animals and humans and in the prevention of outbreaks. Since 2010, the USA had provided extrabudgetary support under the PUI to build the VETLAB network, which had enabled the Agency to provide critical assistance to Member States during the pandemic. The USA would pledge \$1.9 million of its PUI contributions to support VETLAB in 2021.

92. The USA welcomed Agency efforts to implement the following phase of the ReNuAL project and had allocated an additional €5.2 million to the laboratory upgrade effort, specifically to support project management and the upgrading of the dosimetry laboratory. She strongly urged the Secretariat to work with the Friends of ReNuAL and all Member States to mobilize the funding needed to complete the final phase of the Seibersdorf laboratory renovations.

93. Mr COULIBALY KONE (Burkina Faso), introducing the draft resolution on support to AU-PATTEC contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.6 on behalf of the African Group and stressing the draft resolution's importance to the Group, said that the primary aim of AU-PATTEC was to create areas free of tsetse fly and trypanosomosis, while ensuring that the land recovered as a result was used sustainably and efficiently to reduce poverty and increase food security, thereby supporting Member States in their efforts to attain the SDGs.

94. Although new reported cases of human African trypanosomosis had fallen to below 1000 per year — the lowest for several decades — animal trypanosomosis still affected millions of livestock every year and remained a constraint to rural development for tens of millions of people in rural communities in 37 African countries, most of them Member States.

95. Despite the many significant developments that had occurred in 2020, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic the draft resolution was based on the relevant text adopted by the General Conference at its sixty-third session with only three strictly technical updates, to paragraphs (e) and (s) of the preamble and operative paragraph 11. The updates had been approved in informal consultations first by the African Group, then by the G-77 and China, and lastly by the remaining Member States; the resulting text appeared to command consensus.

96. Whereas needs on the continent remained constant, funding for AU-PATTEC projects was dwindling. The Group therefore appealed to the Secretariat to approve further efforts to fund AU-PATTEC and called primarily on Member States in a position to do so to fund the project further.

97. Mr OKO (Nigeria) said that, although the Agency's substantial support to African Member States in previous years had enabled tangible progress to be made in eradicating tsetse fly and trypanosomosis, much remained to be done. Closing funding gaps for AU-PATTEC would provide those States with the technology required. Successes in Burkina Faso and Senegal, and one region of Ethiopia, for example, showed what that technology could do to help African countries overcome the major socioeconomic hindrance to Africa's development that the tsetse fly and trypanosomosis represented.

98. In 2019, the Agency had participated in a series of high-level meetings on the subject hosted in Abuja, providing valuable presentations and technical explanations. It was to be hoped that such collaboration between the Agency and the African Union would continue, along with resource mobilization efforts prioritizing AU-PATTEC.

99. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.6.

100. It was so decided.

101. Ms DYE (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on renovation of the Agency's nuclear application laboratories at Seibersdorf, contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.9, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that the draft resolution underlined the importance of the Agency's nuclear applications laboratories to Member States — especially developing Member States — and the support that those laboratories provided in addressing key challenges, such as by providing training in SIT.

102. Most draft resolutions on the ReNuAL project submitted to the General Conference in previous years had included a full update on the development and implementation status of the project,

contributions by the Friends of ReNuAL, and the next steps to be taken. As with other draft resolutions in 2020, however, only technical elements of the text had been updated, such as the new total of €39 million collected and the names of first-time and repeat donors.

103. The draft resolution again called on the Secretariat to ensure that the laboratories addressed Member States' urgent needs and future demands; to continue to develop targeted resource mobilization using traditional and non-traditional donors; and to pursue target-specific resource mobilization. Member States should continue to offer financial support and make in-kind contributions. She thanked the USA for the substantial additional funding that it had just announced.

104. Mr BULYCHEV (Russian Federation) said that his country was willing to join the consensus on the draft resolution, in view of the broad support it enjoyed and the importance of the Agency's work to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That said, the references in the preamble to a BSL-3 laboratory should not prejudice any decision on whether the Agency would establish its own BSL-3 laboratory or what direction work under the ZODIAC initiative would take. Such a laboratory would require in-depth expert planning, including at the technical meetings provided for in the separate draft resolution on the ZODIAC project, and other options should also be examined.

105. The PRESIDENT took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution on the renovation of the Agency's nuclear application laboratories at Seibersdorf, contained in document GC(64)/COM.5/L.9.

106. It was so decided.

107. Mr HIKIHARA (Japan) said that his country welcomed the adoption of the resolution by consensus.

108. He added that Japan had allocated €1 million to the ZODIAC project through the PUI. It was to be hoped that, building on the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency would continue to play an active role in responding to zoonotic diseases in the future.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.