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MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN NUCLEAR SAFETY, RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The written statement by the Republic of Azerbaijan^{2/} set out overleaf is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

^{2/} Not a Member of the Agency

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The Republic of Azerbaijan has no nuclear power plants or nuclear reactors. However, providing radiation protection for the population and isolating people from the action of ionizing radiation are urgent problems for Azerbaijan.

This is due largely to the fact that natural radiation background levels are increasing everywhere on earth as a consequence of human technological activities. However, the main threat of radioactive contamination of the environment in our region comes from the Medzamor nuclear power plant in neighbouring Armenia.

This threat is due to its location in a seismic danger zone and also to the uncontrolled release of waste waters into a river flowing through the territory of Azerbaijan.

This nuclear power plant, of the same type as the one at Chernobyl, is dangerous. Prolonged mothballing has aggravated the threat posed by its operation. Starting up the Medzamor nuclear power plant will inevitably have a negative influence on the ecological situation not only in Azerbaijan, but throughout the region. The probability of an accident at the power plant is so great that the entire region will be on the brink of catastrophe while it is in operation.

On 26 September 1995 the Armenian authorities intend to resume operation of this nuclear power plant, despite objections raised by many States.

The IAEA has never taken any decision to the effect that the Medzamor nuclear power plant is safe in terms of its technical parameters. We believe that the IAEA, as an authoritative international organization, should intensify its controls and its influence throughout the Southern Caucasus region. The Republic of Azerbaijan hopes that this esteemed organization, recognizing the full extent of the danger of operating the Medzamor nuclear power plant, will take all steps available to it to prevent its startup in order to avert disaster.