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President: Mr. MINTY (South Africa)

Later: Mr. SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARASIA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EC	elemental carbon
EU	European Union
HEU	high-enriched uranium
IMRT	intensity-modulated radiation therapy
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPCs	national participation costs
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OC	organic carbon
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PCMF	Programme Cycle Management Framework
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

PET	positron emission tomography
R&D	research and development
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
SSAC	State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2005 (continued) (GC(50)/4)

1. Mr. EGLĀJS (Latvia) congratulated the staff of the Agency and its Director General on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize which was deserved recognition of the Agency's work over the preceding 50 years.
2. He expressed appreciation for the successful development of the Agency's technical cooperation activities. The changes which had been made to the procedures for submitting new projects, and the possibility of monitoring all activities via the Internet, were very positive developments. His country continued to benefit from technical cooperation projects. The purpose of one such project was to establish a biological dosimetry laboratory to provide new opportunities for research activities as well as substantial input for radiation protection.
3. Progress had been made in establishing a multi-purpose cyclotron centre in Latvia. His Government had recently approved the relevant concept document which would facilitate further implementation of that project. It had decided to opt for a public-private partnership and was therefore facing the challenge of finding private investors willing to participate in the development of the cyclotron centre.
4. He thanked the staff of the Department for Technical Cooperation for their outstanding performance, cooperation and readiness to assist. Latvia had benefited greatly from its participation in technical cooperation activities and felt that the exchange of knowledge and experience provided a great opportunity for all countries.
5. General Conference resolution GC(49)/RES/9 had highlighted the critical role of emergency response and the need for appropriate training in dealing with nuclear and radiological accidents. With the support of the Phare programme, his country had substantially improved its early warning system and had enhanced the capability of its emergency preparedness system. It had modernized its monitoring system and had organized additional training for emergency response personnel. It was vital that developments in nuclear energy were accompanied by improvements in emergency preparedness. The year 2006 marked the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Latvia had suffered from that accident and recognized the importance of developing an effective emergency preparedness system.
6. He welcomed the successful finalization of the international catalogue of sealed radioactive sources and devices, which should contribute to improving radiation safety and serve as a tool in cases involving the discovery of orphan sources.
7. A universal nuclear non-proliferation regime supported by a safeguards system was essential in ensuring collective security. The strength of the NPT lay in its three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It was therefore regrettable that several States party to the Treaty had not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements. Every State should fulfil its obligations under the NPT and contribute to the reinforcement of the international non-proliferation regime. Comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols constituted the current Agency verification standard. Having analysed the situation in respect of other international instruments aimed at preventing the proliferation and development of weapons of mass destruction, his

country considered that there was room for improvement. Currently, only a few dozen countries participated in export, import and transit control regimes for dual-use items.

8. Latvia was implementing the decision, taken in 2002, to decommission the Salaspils research reactor, which was the country's sole reactor. It appreciated the assistance provided by the Agency and the financial support received from the United States of America under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative for the removal of fresh nuclear fuel from the reactor premises. Although negotiations regarding the return of spent fuel to the country of origin had proved unsuccessful, it was hoped that an agreement would be reached in the current year allowing decommissioning activities to proceed. The issue was an important one for Latvia because the removal of the spent fuel was a precondition for the successful implementation of the decommissioning plan.

9. His country continued to engage in activities to extend its radioactive waste disposal site. As emphasized in its report at the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Latvia's objective was to ensure the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. Those activities needed to be undertaken now and not left for future generations. His Government attached great importance to radioactive waste management and intended to spare no effort to resolve the issue.

10. Mr. IVANAJ (Albania) congratulated the Agency and its Director General on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005.

11. Albania attached great importance to the implementation of all international conventions and treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular those related to terrorism, and all resolutions and decisions adopted by the Agency's General Conference and Board of Governors. It had signed and ratified all 12 conventions related to terrorism and had incorporated them into its national legislation. It had met all its obligations under the relevant international instruments and treaties and would continue to do so in the future, assigning that matter permanent priority in its foreign policy.

12. His country was taking the final legislative steps to complete and adopt a comprehensive national atomic law which would cover safeguards-related issues and the relevant structures to ensure leadership and control over all nuclear and radiation-related matters and activities in line with international obligations, requirements and standards. The Albanian authorities were cooperating closely in that regard with the relevant departments of the Agency.

13. Equal importance was being given to non-safeguards activities. Nuclear applications were important for national development and it was his Government's policy in the field of non-power applications to ensure radiation protection and safety and security, to improve further and consolidate the regulatory framework, to adapt and harmonize related national infrastructure and to consolidate the legal basis for all nuclear-related activities.

14. Albania wished to benefit as much as possible from the Agency's unique experience, expertise and role through the technical cooperation programme and PACT. It demonstrated the seriousness with which it viewed technical cooperation by meeting its financial obligations in full. He called on all Member States to do likewise if they wished to receive continued and sustained assistance from the Agency.

15. His country was grateful to the Agency for its continual support, cooperation and assistance in a wide range of effective projects which had had a positive impact, in particular in the human health sector in the fields of radiation therapy and nuclear medicine. The Agency's cancer control programmes enjoyed the full support and high appreciation of the Albanian Government which hoped that they would continue to be pursued and strengthened. The oncology service at the Mother Teresa

Hospital should soon become a centre of excellence thanks to the assistance of the Agency and other international organizations and financial institutions. A national cancer strategy and plan were in the final stages of preparation, through a brachytherapy machine and a linear accelerator would be required to achieve the country's goals in that area. Albania would continue to demonstrate its full commitment and seriousness, including through cost-sharing.

16. Continued cooperation was also important in the field of nuclear security to ensure the prevention and combating of illicit trafficking in radioactive material and terrorist threats, and to reduce radiological threats.

17. Mr. RAMZY (Egypt) congratulated the Agency and its Director General on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

18. The 50th anniversary of the Agency provided an appropriate opportunity to reflect on the direction the organization should take in order to meet new demands arising under new political and economic circumstances. The Agency was unique among multilateral institutions as its mandate had both a security dimension, involving supervision of the application of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and arms control, and an economic and developmental dimension, involving assistance in promoting the use of the most sustainable of all forms of energy in support of peaceful development goals. Its work should therefore evolve to reflect basic changes in international security and the global economy. Egypt aspired to cooperate with the Agency as it developed its vital role in maintaining security and stability and in promoting sustainable development in line with its Statute, the NPT and the resolutions adopted by various United Nations bodies.

19. The fact that nuclear power now accounted for 16% of global electricity generation was a positive development in view of the rising cost of fossil fuels and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Agency, which played a pivotal role in helping developing countries switch to nuclear energy, should step up its efforts to provide information and to promote transfer of technology and expertise in support of nuclear electricity production, especially since, according to the Annual Report, such production was concentrated in an extremely limited number of States.

20. He expressed concern about the unprecedented increase in uranium prices and growing uncertainty regarding the future availability of supplies from secondary sources. It was important to promote international cooperation with a view to developing a strategy to meet expected needs.

21. With regard to nuclear knowledge management, Egypt appreciated the Agency's efforts to expand the existing database and to train human resources, especially in developing countries. International action in support of such efforts should be increased.

22. His country welcomed the Agency's work on combating disease, particularly the PACT programme, which should be intensified and given increased funding, and the establishment of the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund.

23. Egypt cooperated closely with the Agency on water resources management, in particular on the development of a programme of action for integrated management of the Nubian sandstone aquifer. It appreciated the Agency's assistance in studying and assessing groundwater sources in the Saharan regions.

24. He commended the steps taken by the Agency to improve the preparation of technical cooperation projects and stressed the importance of augmenting the practical benefits and long-term sustainability of such projects. It was to be hoped that the administrative restructuring of the technical cooperation programme would enable it to respond effectively to the growing number of projects and the increase in the number of developing Member States. There were many projects under way in Egypt in the areas of health, environmental protection, water management, pest control and

agriculture. A plan for optimum use of the country's second research reactor had been developed in cooperation with the Agency and work on clearing Second World War landmines from the western desert was being intensified. Other projects involved the training of human resources — not only Egyptians, but also staff from other Arab countries in cooperation with the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, and from African countries in cooperation with AFRA.

25. He drew attention to the continued imbalance between the three pillars of the Agency's mandate. A smaller proportion of financial resources from both the Regular Budget and extrabudgetary sources was allotted to the technical cooperation programme and technology transfer for development. That gave rise to a misguided image of the Agency as a body whose sole task consisted in implementing non-proliferation safeguards. More attention should be paid to the important developmental and economic dimensions of the Agency's mandate. The negotiations on the resources in the TCF had clearly demonstrated the shortcomings in the Agency's prioritization of its activities and the failure to attach the requisite importance to those aspects of its work. The whole issue needed to be reviewed in light of the fact that a majority of the Agency's Member States accorded priority to technical cooperation.

26. Turning to nuclear safety and security, he said that the continued improvement in nuclear power plant operational safety standards referred to in the Annual Report should not lead to a relaxation of efforts in that regard. The Agency should pay more attention to the development of human resources, to enhancing the ability of staff to improve the safety of research reactors, and to identifying the best disposal options for radioactive waste. The Agency should also assess the risks posed by radioactive waste from ageing reactors in the Middle East — specifically in Israel — that were not subject to safeguards, since they represented a serious threat to neighbouring countries.

27. He welcomed the increase in the number of Member States that had ratified comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency and efforts to strengthen application of the SQP and make it more consistent with verification and non-proliferation goals. It was important to assess countries' technical and operational capabilities, and variations in such capabilities, in the context of attempts to ensure the universal application of additional protocols. Before a country took on additional, and more costly and complex obligations, it should be clear that it was capable of implementing the required safeguards measures and complying with the relevant provisions.

28. Egypt attached major importance to the use of improved technological capabilities and methodologies to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. It requested more information regarding current research and future plans in that regard and more support for developing countries in implementing systems of accounting for and control of nuclear material. During 2006, Egypt had adopted a decision to restructure its nuclear material control and monitoring system with a view to modernizing and developing the application of Agency safeguards in the country. He requested the Agency's assistance in training staff to manage the modernized system.

29. While his country appreciated the action being taken to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it was troubled at continuing efforts to undermine the Agency's role in promoting nuclear disarmament.

30. He congratulated Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on signing an agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Egypt strongly supported the establishment of a similar zone in the Middle East and called on Israel to engage in serious and unequivocal cooperation with a view to achieving that goal.

31. All countries were jointly responsible for strengthening the non-proliferation regime within the limits of their existing technical and economic capabilities. The developed countries, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, therefore bore a greater share of responsibility. The general tendency,

however, was to impose more stringent rules and greater costs on non-nuclear-weapon States which had lived up to their responsibilities and demonstrated their commitment to the non-proliferation regime. There were two major threats to the regime. The first was the continued failure of the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations. Indeed some were developing their military nuclear capabilities. The second was the continued existence of military nuclear programmes and capabilities that were not covered by the NPT, particularly those of Israel which pursued a policy of nuclear ambiguity and openly relied on a nuclear deterrent policy while claiming that its conventional military capability exceeded that of all other countries in the region. Israel was a source of instability on account of its occupation of territory and its use of military force against civilians and civilian infrastructure. To achieve peace in the Middle East, a firm international commitment was needed to build a new security system founded on balance and mutual guarantees. Ridding the region of nuclear weapons would constitute an important first step in that direction.

32. Although 15 years had passed since the General Conference had adopted a resolution calling on all States in the Middle East to apply full-scope safeguards, Israel and the major world powers had failed to take any step to achieve that goal, although Egypt and all other States in the region were parties to the NPT and were implementing safeguards. The continuance of that situation could lead to the collapse of the non-proliferation regime in the Middle East and the start of an arms race. He urged the General Conference to address the nuclear threat in the Middle East by adopting by consensus the draft resolution sponsored by Egypt concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Egypt viewed the adoption of a similar resolution by consensus at each session as a reflection of the international community's commitment to well-known positions and principles regarding the achievement of peace, stability and security in the Middle East, and of its sincere wish to attain that goal.

33. Mr. KAKODKAR (India) delivered the following message from the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on the occasion of the 50th session of the General Conference of the Agency:

"I am happy to convey my greetings to members of the International Atomic Energy Agency, its Director General, and members of the IAEA Secretariat on the occasion of this 50th General Conference. Over the past five decades, the Agency has made commendable progress in fulfilling its objectives as laid down in its Statute. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Dr. ElBaradei and the Agency last year is a timely and well deserved tribute to the IAEA's contribution.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency is an unique organization in the entire UN system, founded on a strong science base and dedicated to spreading understanding of and knowledge about the benefits of atomic energy in a safe and secure manner, with special attention to those areas of the world where developmental needs and aspirations are yet to be fulfilled and are therefore most pressing. With issues related to energy resource sustainability assuming increasing salience and global climate change looming large as arguably the most serious challenge of our time, atomic energy with its immense energy potential and readily available and deployable technologies has become an inevitable and indispensable part of the solution.

"Nuclear energy, being unique in its ability to regenerate more fuel from uranium and thorium several tenfolds while producing energy, offers us the possibility of meeting global energy requirements in a non-polluting and sustainable manner. However, if we are to be successful in realizing the potential of the atom in meeting our needs, we need to act in concert consistent with the spirit of global harmony and adhering to our respective international commitments. The IAEA and Director General deserve high compliments for ensuring that the Agency is an effective platform for the global community to work together in its noble mission of 'atoms for peace and prosperity'.

“India, home to one sixth of the world population and having embarked on a rapid economic growth path, has a strong interest in utilizing the full potential of atomic energy for national development. I am confident this will be realized, based on our natural endowment of vast thorium resources and the development of effective technologies for their utilization.

“We have developed advanced technological capability based on our own self-reliant efforts, while having maintained an unblemished record of responsible behaviour. I am glad that the emerging possibility for expanding civil nuclear cooperation between India and the international community would supplement and complement our domestic efforts to meet the developmental aspirations of our people through additional nuclear energy inputs. We look forward to cooperating with international partners in realizing this possibility.

“While nuclear power is of crucial importance for sustainable development, of equal significance are other peaceful applications of atomic energy. The Agency’s Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) is one such important effort which I am happy to learn is being given special emphasis. India, having developed significant experience in affordable cancer-related programmes, has been supporting this activity actively and would be pleased to offer a recently developed cobalt-60 teletherapy machine (Bhabhatron) as a contribution to the Agency’s PACT.

“It is my hope that the fiftieth session of the General Conference would be an important milestone in the ongoing and future work of the Agency. I wish you all productive deliberations and progress in your important tasks. My greetings and good wishes to all.”

34. As well as being the 50th anniversary of the Agency, the current year was also the 50th year of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, the premier nuclear research centre in India, and Dr. Homi Bhabha, the founder of the Indian atomic energy programme, had been the President of the first Geneva conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy held in 1955.

35. The Government of India had recently approved a pre-project activity for eight reactor units at four different sites with a total power generation capacity of 6800 MW(e). With the completion of those units, along with other units already under construction, the total nuclear power generation capacity in India would reach around 14 000 MW(e).

36. India considered a closed nuclear fuel cycle crucial to the implementation of its three-stage nuclear power programme with its long-term objective of tapping the vast energy available in the country’s thorium resources. The Indian Government was therefore committed to the development and deployment of technologies related to all aspects of a closed nuclear fuel cycle.

37. India had made two major achievements in the current year in the field of high-level radioactive waste management technology: the hot commissioning of the advanced vitrification system which employed a Joule-heated ceramic melter; and the demonstration of cold crucible vitrification technology.

38. Construction of the 500 MW(e) prototype fast breeder reactor was on schedule and it was expected to be commissioned by 2010. In keeping with India’s philosophy of using fuel efficiently by closing the fuel cycle, design and construction work had begun on a fuel cycle facility to cater for that reactor which would be commissioned by 2012. Many R&D programmes were being pursued in associated areas, such as advanced materials, structural mechanics, heat transport, in-service inspection systems, physics, chemistry and safety, in order to provide inputs for the further advancement of fast breeder reactor technology. That provided a strong foundation for India’s fast reactor programme. The country was also prepared to contribute to international efforts in that field as an equal partner with other countries with advanced technological capabilities.

39. Thorium utilization was the long-term core objective of the Indian nuclear programme to achieve energy independence on a sustainable basis. The third stage of the programme was thus based on the thorium–uranium-233 cycle. India was actively engaged in developing a 300 MW(e) advanced heavy water reactor whose design incorporated several features to meet the objectives for future advanced nuclear energy systems. A critical facility to validate that reactor's physics design would become functional in 2006.

40. Indian scientists were also working on establishing an India-based neutrino observatory for comprehensive research in neutrino physics, an area in which Indian research groups had a sustained interest and to which they had made significant contributions. India would welcome the participation of international scientific groups in that effort. The Indus-2 2.5 GeV synchrotron radiation source which was being set up at the Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology in Indore was now functioning. Utilization of the storage ring for condensed matter studies had also begun.

41. The excellent safety record of Indian reactors and other facilities had been achieved through sustained R&D programmes. As part of the safety studies on nuclear containment structures, construction of a 1:4 scale containment model had begun at Tarapur. The ultimate load capacity of the containment would be studied using the test model and the experimental results would be made available to the participants in a round robin exercise. His country would welcome the participation of interested research groups in that exercise.

42. A special event on assurances of supply and non-proliferation was being held during the current session of the General Conference. Less than half of the world's 443 nuclear power reactors were under Agency safeguards. Even so, and with the very slow growth in nuclear power over the preceding two decades, the human and financial resources required for the implementation of safeguards had taken up a large proportion of the resources available to the Agency. With the anticipated rapid growth in demand for nuclear power, mainly in developing countries, cost-effective safeguards were essential so that the safeguards system could provide the necessary assurances without hindering the development of nuclear power. His country therefore felt it was necessary to look for institutional as well as technological solutions which enhanced proliferation resistance while guaranteeing an assured fuel supply, without adversely affecting the long-term sustainability of nuclear fuel resources. Thorium offered an important and attractive solution and he urged the Agency and its members to give the thorium route serious consideration. India had developed advanced capabilities in the utilization of thorium in a closed fuel cycle. It was convinced that that strategy for the country's global long-term energy security was viable and sustainable. In a scenario where nuclear power provided a significant proportion of the energy supply in a world where everyone was assured of a minimum of 5000 kW·h of energy annually, the world's uranium resources would only last a few decades if used in once-through mode. Even if a proliferation-resistant nuclear energy system that could address the need for the incineration of surplus plutonium became available in the shorter term, the use of thorium in reactors using proven technologies was vastly superior to other options based on fast reactors. In his presentation at the special event, he would be urging the Agency to boost activities that could lead to an early expansion of nuclear energy using, inter alia, a thorium-based fuel cycle.

43. The Agency needed to maintain a balance between its promotional and safeguards-related activities. The problems caused by global climate change and the rapid depletion of fossil fuels were real and substantial and India believed that a future increase in the share of nuclear energy, as a clean energy source, was possible in a manner that satisfied the imperatives of nuclear safety and security. It therefore advocated the pooling of scientific and technological capabilities to find holistic solutions so that the next 50 years might come to be seen as a golden age of nuclear energy development, an endeavour in which his country was prepared to play its part.

Mr. Soltanieh (Islamic Republic of Iran) took the Chair.

44. Mr. PETRIČ (Slovenia) said that the Agency's 50th anniversary provided an excellent opportunity to review its achievements and its efficiency and effectiveness in responding to the challenges of nuclear energy in the modern world. The professionalism of the Director General and the Secretariat and their impartiality had been justly rewarded with the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

45. Slovenia supported the work of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute. The Committee would have to deal with many complex technical, legal and political issues as it considered different options for strengthening the safeguards system and advised the Board thereon. The adoption of a sound work programme would pave the way for the Committee's success. Nuclear energy had potential for growth and some countries already had plans to introduce and expand nuclear power. Under the circumstances, the safeguards system provided the best possible assurances against misuse.

46. Comprehensive safeguards agreements together with additional protocols were the current Agency verification standard. Without additional protocols, verification was limited and detection of undeclared nuclear activities and related material not easily possible. Over 100 NPT States Party still did not have an additional protocol in force and universal application of additional protocols should be a common goal.

47. In playing its role in reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Agency was making good efforts to establish resources and knowledge for the prevention and detection of and prompt response to malicious acts involving nuclear and radioactive material. Those activities were mainly financed from the extrabudgetary Nuclear Security Fund to which Slovenia had contributed €23 000 in 2005. It had also hosted two regional training courses. His country had been among the first signatories of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which was a welcome addition to the 12 existing counter-terrorism treaties because it recognized that nowhere was entirely safe from terrorists. It was important that the Convention receive widespread support and he urged those Member States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

48. A robust international legal framework was one of the prerequisites for using nuclear material, other radioactive substances and related facilities safely and securely. The amended CPPNM was one of the most important legal instruments in the field of nuclear security. As a party to that Convention, Slovenia had participated actively in the revision process. As it attached great importance to the enhanced international security regime in general and to physical protection in particular, it had prioritized the ratification of the amendments which was expected to be complete by mid-autumn 2006. Universal adherence to relevant international instruments, the harmonization of national legal and regulatory frameworks and the effective application of relevant measures could make a decisive contribution to the prevention and detection of theft, sabotage, unauthorized access and other malicious acts involving nuclear material. He called on those Member States which had not already done so to adhere to the amended Convention.

49. Slovenia attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, one important aspect of which was to provide developing Member States with the knowledge and resources they needed to establish independent and sustainable national nuclear programmes and institutions. Contributing to those goals should be seen as the main success criterion for a project. Project evaluation should try to identify successful projects that might benefit other countries or regions. As funding was limited and had to be used effectively, relaunching of successful projects in other countries should be encouraged, as only minimal changes to the project design would be required, the risk of failure would be reduced and the benefits maximized.

50. Slovenia had pledged its full share of the TCF for 2007 and was grateful to the co-chairmen of the working group, the Ambassadors of Sri Lanka and Norway, for having brought the difficult negotiations on the TCF target to a successful conclusion.

51. As in preceding years, the Secretariat had submitted an updated report on progress with the ratification of the amendments to the Agency's Statute agreed on in 1999 regarding the composition of the Board and biennial budgeting. Slovenia was among those States which had deposited instruments of acceptance at a very early stage and it endorsed the view that the entry into force of both amendments would greatly help enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency. He urged those Member States which had not yet done so to finalize their acceptance of the amendments.

52. Slovenia recognized the Secretariat's efforts to establish a unified and coordinated incident and emergency response system which would constitute a focal point for Member States to report events and exchange information. The Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre was only one component of the communication network, which also comprised contact points in Member States. The Secretariat had replaced the Emergency Response Network, ERNET, with the more service-oriented Response Assistance Network, RANET, which was in line with the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies adopted by the Board in 2004. That action plan established guidelines for harmonizing response arrangements in the areas of notification, communication, dissemination of information, assistance and sustainability of the system. It was quite demanding, had been foreseen to last until 2009 and required some extrabudgetary funding. It had reached approximately the half-way point and its achievements should be assessed soon.

53. His country frequently used OSART missions. In November 2005, a mission following up on that of 2003 — the third since the Krško nuclear power plant had begun commercial operation in 1983 — had found that over two thirds of the recommendations had been fully implemented and significant progress had been made on the rest. The team had also noted that the plant's management was committed to nuclear safety and had been working to improve reliability of operation.

54. Slovenia had participated actively in the second review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Its practices described in its national report, such as involvement of the public in the siting process for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste storage facilities, and a levy paid into the decommissioning fund based on the electrical power produced, had been well received. The review meeting had decided not to change the review process but had requested that national reports be more focused at the next meeting. All aspects of the review process would have to be analysed in the future. The Convention still had only a limited number of Contracting Parties and only 41 had participated in the review meeting, despite the fact that almost all States possessed radioactive waste. Slovenia strongly supported the Secretariat's efforts to encourage more States to adhere to the Convention by organizing regional workshops.

55. With regard to the control of disused radioactive sources, his country had noticed a steady increase in the number of such sources in imported scrap metal shipments. It was therefore preparing a regulation requiring that all such shipments be subjected to radiological monitoring before entering the country. They would be returned if radioactivity was detected.

56. Slovenia's initiative on regional repositories for high-level radioactive waste had been well received at the first review meeting under the Joint Convention but little progress had been made since then. The issue was a complex one, but there was increasing awareness of the need to resolve the problem of spent fuel.

57. His country was in the final stages of selecting a site for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste disposal and expected to take a decision by the end of 2006, or in 2007 at the latest. Studies of site characteristics had been concluded and the public had been informed.

58. Finally, nuclear energy might play an important role in Slovenia's plans to ensure a stable energy supply.

59. Mr. OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the number of developing countries joining the Agency attested to the importance those countries attached to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in support of development.

60. Congratulating the Agency and the Director General on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he said that the peoples of the Middle East aspired more than ever before to peace and security and would work hard to achieve a secure and peaceful future for their children. The items on application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East and Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat had been on the General Conference's agenda for more than a decade. However, the Director General had been unable to discharge the mandate assigned to him by General Conference resolutions calling for the early application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all countries in the region because one State had resisted the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East until such time as its so-called security conditions had been fulfilled.

61. In July and August 2006, the world had witnessed one of the most brutal and savage wars in human history during which children, women and old people had been killed, Lebanon's infrastructure had been destroyed, homes had been levelled with the occupants inside, and hundreds of thousands of people had been displaced, all on the pretext of maintaining Israeli's security. In the light of Israel's aggressive conduct in Lebanon and Palestine, the General Conference should discuss the two agenda items with the requisite gravity. Israel, which considered itself above international law, was quite prepared to resort to the most barbarous means to achieve its expansionist aims. Its possession of nuclear weapons without any international monitoring, and its refusal to accede to the NPT and to apply comprehensive Agency safeguards, undermined security and peace in the region and could trigger an arms race. He called on the major powers to compel Israel to comply with international law, using the kind of pressure that they brought to bear on other countries in the region.

62. Article IV of the NPT recognized the sovereign and inalienable right of countries that voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In return, the nuclear-weapon States had undertaken on a number of occasions to assist those countries in developing their peaceful nuclear capabilities. Their failure to act on that commitment raised questions as to its seriousness and credibility. The Syrian Government supported Iran's sovereign right to possess nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and the right of countries in the region to be given assurances in that regard. The need to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was more pressing than ever before. His Government urged the international community to stop applying double standards and to address the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons.

63. Participants in the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute should show flexibility, transparency and objectivity in adopting recommendations and should avoid interfering with the aspirations of developing countries, in particular to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. As the Committee was advisory, its recommendations should be adopted by consensus. Developing countries were being denied access to nuclear technology on the pretext of non-proliferation. While his country strongly supported the non-proliferation regime, some countries could not be allowed to monopolize nuclear knowledge and technology at the expense of others.

64. Syria supported all initiatives aimed at preventing criminal and terrorist acts, particularly nuclear terrorism, which posed a major threat to the environment, health and property. It had recently acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

65. His country also supported the conversion of civilian research reactors from HEU to LEU fuel, especially in the light of the growing threat of nuclear terrorism. However, countries should not have to bear the costs of such conversion since they had acquired the reactors at a time when the use of HEU fuel was the norm.

66. Syria had fully complied with all its international obligations in respect of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transport of radioactive material and the disposal of radioactive waste. It had signed the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It also complied with the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and had promulgated a national decree on the safety and security of such sources in 2005.

67. He thanked the Agency for the guidance it had provided on the design of technical cooperation projects in accordance with the new PCMF and requested it to organize a workshop for users.

68. Two years previously, the principle of national cost-sharing had been adopted as part of a package deal that would increase the resources available for both technical cooperation and safeguards. He called for a review of the arrangements for payment of NPCs before the projects approved for the new cycle were implemented. The Agency froze all components of projects until 2.5% of total national core funding for the first year had been paid, a process that took more than three months in some countries. As an alternative, account could be taken of a country's past financial relationship with the Agency. The application of the cost-sharing principle to regional and interregional projects should also be reviewed.

69. During the preceding year, Syria had hosted 18 trainees specializing in various fields and had held 4 training courses. In 2006, it had hosted 6 regional courses under regional and ARASIA projects. Seven researchers from the Syrian Atomic Energy Commission had made available their expertise in radiation technology, the safety of radioactive sources and environmental radiation monitoring. In 2005, Syria had allocated more than US \$50 000 for the translation into Arabic of teaching and training materials, and books and brochures on nuclear technology. It had also contributed \$300 000 to the national project on the production of diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals using a cyclotron.

70. The member States of ARASIA had submitted four regional cooperation projects for the next cycle and had implemented three projects that had proved to be of great benefit to the participants. The Syrian Atomic Energy Commission was still providing the secretariat for ARASIA, easing the financial burden on the Agency.

71. The Agency's PACT programme was one of its most important programmes in the area of human health. Syria strongly supported the decision to establish a cancer control alliance with a number of leading international and national organizations, in keeping with the principle of partnership for development. He urged donor countries to make financial contributions and contributions in kind to ensure the successful implementation of the programme and thanked the Agency for donating its share of the Nobel Peace Prize to the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund. However, the Agency should review the funding procedures for programmes of that kind, since over-dependence on donations could have an adverse impact on implementation.

72. Finally, the Arabic-language master's degree course on radiation protection and safety of radioactive sources, run jointly by the Agency, the Syrian Atomic Energy Commission and Damascus University, was beginning its seventh academic year that week. More than 150 students had graduated during the preceding six years.

73. Mr. SMITH (Australia) said that, as one of the small number of States which had gathered together over 50 years previously to draft the Statute, his country had had a long and fruitful involvement with the Agency and was proud to have contributed to its mission since its inauguration.

74. Australia was a major contributor to the advancement of peaceful nuclear applications and had a significant nuclear science and technology base, including that associated with the state-of-the-art open pool Australian light water (OPAL) research reactor which was currently undergoing hot commissioning in Sydney by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO). OPAL would shortly be providing neutrons to a world-class neutron scattering and diffraction facility, and for the production of medical isotopes. Australia saw it as a regional facility for nuclear applications in health, biology, engineering and nutrition. Thus, it had encouraged other countries in the region to invest jointly in neutron beam instruments and looked forward to developing collaborative programmes in areas of importance to its partners.

75. His country made a substantial contribution to the TCF and supported the ongoing reform of the technical cooperation programme to strengthen its effectiveness. It also provided significant extrabudgetary funding to the RCA and was engaged in a range of bilateral nuclear cooperation activities.

76. The Agency's safeguards system, developed to provide assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear programmes, had been remarkably successful but had faced serious challenges. Australia would continue to work to ensure that Agency safeguards kept pace with nuclear proliferation challenges and responded to current concerns. It supported strongly the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute which should, together with the Board, grasp the opportunity to ensure that the Agency had access to the full range of measures it needed to fulfil its verification mandate. Weaknesses in the safeguards system were being remedied by the application of strengthened safeguards, in particular the additional protocol which improved the Agency's capacity to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. States with significant nuclear activities still outside the strengthened safeguards system were out of step with the overwhelming majority. Adherence to the additional protocol was the best way to ensure the long-term effectiveness of Agency safeguards and Australia was working with the organization and other countries to provide assistance to other States in the Asia-Pacific region with application of the additional protocol.

77. His country was also involved in developing closer regional collaboration to improve the effectiveness of nuclear safeguards and physical protection. Such important work would become even more significant as other countries in the region explored the nuclear power option. Australia had worked with the Agency for two decades to host regional training courses on the effective operation of SSACs, including a special SSAC course in 2006 for Iraqi Government officials held at the request of the Agency's Department of Safeguards. Also in 2006, in collaboration with the Agency and the United States Department of Energy, his country had hosted a second regional course on the physical protection of nuclear material and facilities. It had worked with the Agency and the Japanese and United States Governments to hold a regional seminar on multilateral verification which had attracted 65 participants from 26 countries, and it would continue to provide practical support to the Agency through those and other means.

78. A key factor in the successful development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was commitment and adherence to international standards for nuclear safety and security, including those set out in the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Code of Conduct on the Safety of Research Reactors. His country was pleased to support the adoption of the Agency's Safety Fundamentals, which were an important step in demonstrating the unity of radiation protection and nuclear safety.

79. Australia had welcomed the conclusion of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in 2005 and had been among the first group of States to sign it. Its contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund and the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction illustrated the importance that it attached to ensuring that the threat of nuclear terrorism never became a reality. Australia was also a partner in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which aimed to improve nuclear accounting, control and protection and ensure the effective prosecution of nuclear terrorists, inter alia.

80. His country took seriously the potential threat posed by high-activity radioactive sources, including during their legitimate shipment as part of international trade. It was pleasing to see increasing international support for the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. States that had not yet adhered to those standards should do so. His country was working to implement the Guidance nationally and strongly supported the establishment of a mechanism to enable States to share their experiences in implementing the Code. Australia had participated in regional initiatives to reduce the risks posed by vulnerable radioactive sources and acknowledged the benefits of cooperation with the Agency and the United States National Nuclear Security Administration in that regard.

81. Around the world, public concerns about the safety of radioactive waste management continued to hamper the development of the nuclear industry. Australia had been pleased to participate in the second review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in May 2006 and had been particularly heartened by the steps taken by a number of important nuclear States to join that Convention. Almost all States, regardless of whether they had a nuclear power programme, had some form of radioactive waste to manage and those that had not yet done so should adhere to the Convention. The continued safety of nuclear installations in all regions of the world was of fundamental importance. Regional cooperation and information exchange were an important part of that process and Australia was pleased to support the goals of the Asian Nuclear Safety Network, the Steering Committee of which it currently chaired.

82. Developments in the global energy market had renewed interest in nuclear power generation as a technology that could help meet growing electricity needs without price fluctuations, supply uncertainties or the environmental costs associated with fossil fuels. Nuclear power had a role to play in delivering significant baseload power with minimal greenhouse gas emissions. Australia had helped develop the groundbreaking Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, bringing together for the first time key industries of developed and developing countries to promote practical efforts. Nuclear energy had been identified in the Partnership's vision statement as an area for possible future collaboration.

83. The provision of uranium for peaceful purposes was one of the main ways in which Australia gave effect to its Article IV commitment under the NPT to facilitate peaceful applications of nuclear energy. It was a major supplier to the global nuclear power industry and held approximately 40% of the world's known low-cost uranium reserves. In 2005, it had exported over 12 000 tonnes of uranium ore concentrate and accounted for 23% of world primary uranium production. However, Australian

uranium producers had encountered difficulties in securing reliable commercial shipping, even though it was very much in the interest of uranium consumers to help ensure the availability of such services.

84. Australia's uranium export policy recognized the strategic significance that distinguished uranium from other energy commodities. The country exported uranium only to States party to the NPT that had signed bilateral safeguards agreements setting conditions for the use of Australian material. In 2005, it had announced its intention to make the additional protocol a condition for its supply of uranium to non-nuclear-weapon States. Its most recent bilateral safeguards treaty was with China. Australia's safeguards agreements formed part of the global system of interlocking and mutually reinforcing mechanisms that comprised the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Australian policies had ensured that a very significant proportion of nuclear material in international use was covered by the strictest non-proliferation conditions.

85. The Australian Government had established a task force to review uranium mining and processing and the potential contribution of nuclear energy in Australia. The review would cover a wide range of issues, including the country's capacity to increase uranium mining and exports, the potential for establishing other steps in the nuclear fuel cycle in Australia, the extent to which nuclear energy could contribute to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, the potential of next-generation nuclear energy technologies, and security issues relating to nuclear energy. The task force was expected to report by the end of 2006.

86. A consistent concern in framing Australia's domestic nuclear policy had been to maintain and strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Australia had been one of the strongest supporters of the NPT as the centrepiece of that regime, which was reinforced by the CTBT. Australia's Foreign Minister was currently jointly chairing a ministerial meeting on the CTBT to encourage support for its entry into force. His country was pleased that there was almost universal commitment to the CTBT as an effective measure for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty had been signed by 176 countries, 135 of which had ratified it. Australia was also encouraged by the work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission to establish its verification regime and recognized the potential of the International Monitoring System to contribute to disaster alert efforts.

87. A fissile material cut-off treaty would impose a quantitative limit on the amount of fissile material available for weapons use. His country was working to overcome entrenched differences in the Conferences on Disarmament which were blocking a start to negotiations on such a treaty. It had been a long-standing supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means of enhancing regional security and reinforcing global nuclear non-proliferation.

88. Ensuring an effective non-proliferation regime required effective control over the spread of proliferation-sensitive technologies. That was being pursued institutionally through development of an appropriate international framework, and technically through the development of proliferation-resistant technologies. Ideas in that regard included multilateral fuel supply assurances, spent fuel take-back, international fuel cycle centres and criteria for assessing the international acceptability of national projects. The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership drew a number of those ideas together and provided an opportunity for further discussion.

89. Australia had a long record of demonstrating strong support for the rights of NPT Parties to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, those rights were not unqualified and did not automatically extend to proliferation-sensitive technologies. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy had to be in conformity with non-proliferation and verification requirements under Articles I, II and III of the NPT. The question as to whether development of uranium enrichment and processing was consistent with the Treaty's non-proliferation objectives depended on many factors, including non-proliferation credentials and clear economic or nuclear fuel cycle justification. Australia was an

active participant in the international dialogue on sensitive nuclear technology issues and would continue to follow those issues closely, not only from the non-proliferation perspective but also in view of its role as a major uranium supplier.

90. The international security environment had changed markedly, with proliferators resorting to ever more sophisticated methods. Vigilance was required against those who sought to undermine efforts in good faith to bring the benefits of peaceful nuclear applications to the world. The Agency's investigative work had an important role to play in stamping out the pernicious nuclear black market and addressing the changing and developing proliferation threats. Deliberate violations had to be dealt with firmly. It should be recognized that States which wilfully violated safeguards obligations cut themselves off by their own actions from the benefits of peaceful nuclear cooperation.

91. The DPRK's claim that it had nuclear weapons was a grave challenge to international security. Australia was seriously concerned by that country's ongoing refusal to re-engage in the six-party talks, which remained the most appropriate mechanism for finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the DPRK nuclear issue. That country's provocative action in conducting ballistic missile tests in July 2006 had served to increase concerns, but the subsequent united and strong resolve shown by the international community in the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1695 (2006), had sent a clear message to it. Only by making the strategic decision to give up nuclear weapons and reaffirm its moratorium on ballistic missile tests could the DPRK begin the process of repairing the harm it had done to its own interests and those of its long-suffering people. Australia urged the DPRK to take that step.

92. Iran was still pursuing a full nuclear fuel cycle without convincing justification. Following 18 years of clandestine nuclear activity and more than 3 years of Agency investigations, key questions remained about the nature and intentions of Iran's nuclear programme. The international community had hoped that the matter would be resolved through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1696 (2006). By persisting with its enrichment programme in the face of that resolution, Iran had breached an obligation with the binding force of international law. It should suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities without delay, thus upholding the authority of the Security Council and the Agency. It was not too late to find a diplomatic solution, but Iran should not lose sight of the seriousness of the choices it had to make. It should act in accordance with the provisions of the additional protocol and implement immediately all the transparency measures requested by the Agency in support of its ongoing investigations. The right choices would set Iran on the path to a future as a respected member of the international community, reaping the benefits of constructive international relationships.

93. Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) said that the Director General's commitment to the cause of Atoms for Peace and sustainable development, and the efforts of the Agency's Secretariat and its Member States, had been justly recognized by the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. The Agency's 50th anniversary provided an opportunity to assess how well it had met its objectives and the challenges it had yet to overcome. Algeria had consistently supported the Agency in its work and would continue to do so.

94. International cooperation in the nuclear field was very important for developing countries which faced many problems, particularly in the fields of human health, food security, water resources and energy. The Agency had a unique mandate for knowledge dissemination and technology transfer to promote socio-economic development and his country supported its activities under all three pillars of its Statute.

95. Algeria supported the Agency's unique verification role. The international priority accorded to non-proliferation should not, however, overshadow the need to work towards disarmament as

stipulated in Article VI of the NPT. Little progress had been made with respect to the commitment entered into by the nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the lack of any reference to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in the final document of the United Nations World Summit, the continual stalling of the deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament and the slow progress towards the ratification of the CTBT all sent out negative messages regarding respect for the fundamental principles determining the future of global security. As a strong supporter of the promotion of nuclear energy for peace and development, Algeria was convinced that strengthening of the non-proliferation regime should go hand in hand with measures to speed up nuclear disarmament. It urged all States to redouble their efforts to reverse the current negative trends and to create favourable conditions for the effective implementation of international commitments. It welcomed Africa's contribution to the universalization of the NPT and to the strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime through the significant increase in the number of States which had ratified the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

96. The war of aggression waged by Israel against Lebanon in 2006 highlighted the need for the international community to strive for peace and move away from power politics which led to the denial of the self-determination of the Palestinian people, the occupation of territories, abuse of force and the promotion of doctrines of 'mass dissuasion' against States in the Middle East, which did not rule out recourse to nuclear weapons. That need was underlined in the resolutions of the General Conference and Board of Governors urging all States in the region without exception to submit all nuclear activities to the Agency's verification system and to consider seriously taking all the practical measures required to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

97. Algeria supported efforts to combat all forms of terrorism, including malicious acts involving nuclear facilities and material. It shared the concern that nuclear weapons might fall into the hands of non-State actors and saw that as another reason to work resolutely towards nuclear disarmament. In that connection, his country took note of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009, adopted by the Board of Governors in September 2005, and the Agency's Medium Term Strategy for 2006–2011. The guidance and recommendations issued on the safety and security of nuclear material and sources were useful for Member States, which held the primary responsibility in that area. Algeria had indicated its willingness to follow the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. It had also signed the amendments to the CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

98. His country attached importance to the universality of the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Following the decision by the Board of Governor to authorize the Director General to conclude an additional protocol with Algeria, a programme of activities had been agreed upon with the Agency to strengthen national technical capacity, including the organization of a national seminar on the additional protocol so that Algeria could meet its new verification commitments. His country was grateful for the trust that had been placed in it by inviting its Resident Representative to chair the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute. It was anxious to preserve the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy granted by Article IV of the NPT and would follow with interest the special event on assurances of supply.

99. All international peace and security issues should be resolved through dialogue and cooperation. As the only organization with the mandate to verify Member States' compliance with non-proliferation commitments, the Agency was the appropriate framework in which to address the implementation of safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran. He praised the professional work of the Agency and its Director General on that issue and urged all the parties concerned to negotiate in

earnest on the offer of the five permanent United Nations Security Council members and Germany in the interests of peace.

100. It was some years since the amendments to Article VI of the Agency's Statute expanding the composition of the Board had been adopted and Agency membership had increased further over that time. He urged all Member States which had not already done so to ratify the amendments in order to ensure that the Board reflected the number and diversity of the Agency's members.

101. Algeria attached particular importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities which fulfilled one of the statutory objectives of the organization, namely to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy in line with Article IV of the NPT. Algeria's programme of cooperation with the Agency reflected the priorities of its Government's five-year plan for 2005–2009, which aimed at economic revival and conservation of natural resources. The objective was to meet the growing needs of industry, agriculture and stockbreeding, and society as a whole, which placed great demands on the energy sector. The implementation rate had been approximately 80% in 2005. Algeria would be making a voluntary contribution to the TCF for 2007.

102. His country supported the Agency's work in such areas as human health, use of isotope hydrology for water resources management, energy development and seawater desalination, human resources development, and nuclear knowledge preservation. Courses on positron emission tomography had been held in Algiers with the participation of Agency experts. Algeria's secondary standards dosimetry laboratory had been approved as a designated regional centre for francophone Africa in July 2006. He also thanked the Agency for the training fellowships and scientific visits awarded to Algerian scientists and experts.

103. The Secretariat was to be commended on the introduction of the new technical cooperation programming framework and the restructuring of the Department of Technical Cooperation. The rate of implementation for programmes in Africa had been over 77% in 2005, which demonstrated the increasing interest of African countries in the Agency's technical cooperation activities and the commitment of recipient institutions to them. Algeria was committed to strengthening TCDC and supported AFRA. It was also grateful to the Agency for its contribution to and support for NEPAD activities.

104. A regional seminar on the use of nuclear techniques to combat locusts had been held in Algiers in July 2006. Algeria was grateful to the Agency and FAO for their involvement in that event and urged them to make the necessary arrangements to implement the action plan adopted. Her country was home to the African Energy Commission and urged the Agency to work on consolidating the progress made under the project on sustainable energy development in Africa, applying the energy planning models developed by the Agency; and to work on establishing preferential cooperation with the Commission. It welcomed the Agency's efforts to help African countries, through AFRA, to develop a regional programme on national strategies for optimizing human resources based on the recommendations of a high-level technical meeting in Algiers. An African Union summit on science and technology for development would be held in January 2007 and the Agency had been asked to help organize a regional conference in Algiers in mid-January 2007 on the contribution of nuclear energy to peace and sustainable development.

105. Mr. MÁRQUEZ MARÍN (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Agency had earned a good reputation over the preceding 50 years and faced new challenges after having received deserved recognition in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005. His country supported the Agency's activities and believed that its role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be strengthened. Fifty years ago, the benefits of nuclear technology had been overshadowed by its destructive power, as demonstrated in the bombs that

destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Following the destruction wrought by wars in the preceding century, the world wished to live in peace, free of the threat posed by the arsenals of the select club of nuclear powers. Developing countries had gained some benefits from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the Agency's technical cooperation programme, though more still needed to be done in that area. As the verification authority for the NPT, the Agency had made an important contribution and its credibility had been strengthened by its declaration that there was no evidence of nuclear weapons in Iraq, despite the pressure exerted by the United States of America. Thus, the Agency had proved a genuinely multilateral organization and his country would continue to support it.

106. While the NPT had dissuaded some States from nuclear weapons proliferation, it had not had the desired effect with respect to nuclear disarmament owing to the Treaty's limited scope. The CTBT also aimed at ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, 10 years after its opening for signature it had still not entered into force, essentially because the United States refused to ratify it.

107. The inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, including the entire fuel cycle, was enshrined in the NPT. However, some States with nuclear knowledge and technology were claiming the right to absolute control over the production, processing and supply of nuclear fuel. They applied double standards, granting some countries the right to such technologies where it suited their interests and denying it to others on the grounds that there was a danger of diversion of nuclear material to non-peaceful uses. Among the latter were States which complied with their NPT obligations such as the Islamic Republic of Iran. At its 14th Summit in Havana, Cuba, in September 2006, the NAM had reaffirmed the basic and inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It had denounced the monopoly on nuclear technology, the double standards applied, and attempts by States which possessed and developed nuclear weapons to prevent others from using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Agency was the only competent authority to verify compliance with safeguards commitments and should not be subjected to pressure which would jeopardize its efficiency and credibility. Therefore negotiations should be held between the EU and Iran on terms which were fair and acceptable to all parties. Venezuela welcomed Iran's statement confirming its commitment to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy, to finding a negotiated solution and to cooperating with the Agency on outstanding issues. It rejected the proposal of some United Nations Security Council members to apply sanctions before the Agency had made a definitive statement regarding possible diversion. His country also urged Israel to begin negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, especially in the wake of the recent Lebanon conflict.

108. Non-proliferation and disarmament were inseparable and equally important for world peace and stability. The NPT should therefore be strengthened to make disarmament a reality.

109. Venezuela had met its financial obligations to the Agency despite the sacrifice that entailed for a developing country. It participated in ARCAL and hoped to see an increase in the number of projects in the region to strengthen South-South cooperation within the framework of the Agency. Venezuela currently held the Vice-Presidency of ARCAL and had offered to host the next regional event in the first half of 2007.

110. Cancer claimed many victims who could have benefited from early treatment, particularly in developing countries. The PACT programme could make a significant contribution in that area and his country therefore supported the proposal to waive the relevant financial regulation so that those countries wishing to do so could contribute their share of the 2004 cash surplus to that programme.

111. Ms. DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that anniversaries provided an opportunity for considering original intentions and motivations in the light of current needs and trends. The main reason for founding the Agency had been to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear material and

technology. President Eisenhower had envisaged an international agency which could supply fissile material and peaceful technology, ensure their safety and security and perform overall accounting. Then the time had not been ripe for such an approach. Now the issue of supply of fissile material was being addressed again in the context of multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle.

112. It had taken half a decade to establish the Agency, another 5 years to build a minimal safeguards system replacing bilateral agreements, and over two decades to put in place a comprehensive system taking into account the whole fuel cycle. Comprehensive accounting and control of fissile material based on the additional protocol was now the minimum requirement.

113. In the face of the threat of nuclear terrorism, it was a safer option to convert potentially dangerous material into a form for peaceful use. Her country had been among the first to adopt practical measures to return high-enriched fuel to its country of origin. It had replaced the high-enriched fuel in its training reactor with low-enriched fuel under a trilateral initiative run by the United States, the Russian Federation and the Agency. The next step was to return high-enriched spent fuel from research reactors designed and manufactured by the former Soviet Union to its country of origin.

114. It had been envisaged that the Agency would supply Member States with reactors or even power plants, but very few such projects had been implemented both for political reasons and because of the commercialization of the nuclear industry. Efforts were currently focused on smaller projects under the technical cooperation programme which was a powerful tool for transferring modern technologies.

115. The Agency's numerous databases, nuclear safety standards, training services and reporting mechanisms under safety-related conventions contributed to nuclear knowledge exchange. The Czech Republic appreciated the technical support the Agency provided to Member States to help them implement their obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety and Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

116. Research had initially been a less important Agency activity. Basic nuclear research currently focused on high-energy particle physics. Applied research could be divided, on the one hand, into secret military research and, on the other, the development of new civil technologies in commercial establishments either in the field of nuclear power or medical and industrial applications of isotopes. Knowledge exchange was generally restricted by commercial interests.

117. Her country valued the Agency's indispensable verification role. The safeguards system provided assurances of the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and considerably reduced illegal transfers of nuclear material and equipment. It could be improved by making Annex II of the additional protocol even stricter to reflect changes in nuclear proliferation, science and technology, and by integrating international safeguards with nuclear export controls. The Czech Republic supported all efforts to modernize the safeguards system.

118. The former Czechoslovakia had been a founder member of the Agency and had played an important role thanks to its industrial and scientific capacity and significant uranium resources. She paid tribute to Dr. Winkler, the first Chairman of the Board of Governors, for his negotiating skills and his contribution to the formulation of the Statute. Many other Czechs and Slovaks had contributed their expertise to the Agency's work.

119. Global support for the development of nuclear power was currently increasing owing to the vulnerability of fossil fuel supplies. The Agency's focus on power plants in the early years had yielded to a focus on nuclear safety and security, especially after the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl accidents. The Agency had played a leading role in establishing globally applicable safety standards.

The latest step in that process had been the approval in September 2006 of a consolidated set of Fundamental Safety Principles.

120. Non-power applications were also important and the Czech Republic was ready to offer cooperation and assistance in the establishment of the necessary legal and regulatory framework and in the utilization of health applications. Although its main interest was in Europe, the Czech Republic also sponsored four national and regional technical cooperation projects in different parts of the world through voluntary extrabudgetary contributions. It was currently working with the Secretariat on a specific project for Montenegro under the PACT programme as one way of repaying the assistance it had received while building its first PET centre almost ten years previously.

121. Looking to the future, her country was ready to cooperate in the further strengthening of non-proliferation and verification. In the nuclear safety field, it was very active in European harmonization and standardization activities. However, a comprehensive set of nuclear safety standards based on worldwide expertise could only be developed within the Agency. Finally, the Czech Republic believed that the Agency's future lay not in the coordination of large research projects but in the day-to-day support of young people who did not have adequate incentives to study science. Interest could be stimulated by enhancing background knowledge through international educational activities or through the provision of advanced equipment for laboratories.

122. Ms. LACANLALE (Philippines) said that 2007 would mark the 50th anniversary of the Philippines' membership of the Agency. Although the country had a modest nuclear energy programme, it had gained much from its relationship with the organization, especially through technical cooperation. The Agency had become an important partner for the Philippines in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Its technical cooperation programme had helped the country, in particular, to increase agricultural and industrial productivity and to gain access to clean drinking water. She thanked the Department of Technical Cooperation for its valuable support.

123. In the area of the environment, the Philippines was participating in the Agency's collaborating centre scheme. In 2005, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute had been designated a collaborating centre for marine toxicity studies. It was undertaking pioneering research using nuclear techniques on saxitoxin, the red tide toxin, a marine organism of economic importance to the country's fishermen. The expertise developed by the Institute in marine environmental studies had led to its active involvement in the formulation of a regional collaborative project run by the RCA Regional Office and the UNDP on the mitigation of the coastal impact of natural disasters like tsunamis using nuclear and isotope-based techniques. The Philippines was serving as the coordinator for that project. Soil studies were also being carried out under technical cooperation programmes at both regional and national level to measure erosion rates.

124. The Philippines was the world's second largest geothermal energy producer, thanks in part to nuclear and stable isotope-based techniques that had contributed significantly to a better understanding of the country's geothermal resources. The Philippine National Oil Company served as a regional resource unit for the RCA in that field.

125. Through the Agency-funded project on air quality control management, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute was able to contribute actively to national air quality status reports and serve a growing number of clients requiring assistance with air pollution-related concerns. The Institute had recently performed an analysis of air filters for the Office of Atoms for Peace in Thailand. The anticipated acquisition of an OC/EC analyser would bring an increased understanding of pollutants, which would in turn help decision-makers develop appropriate national policies. The Institute might even strive to provide analytical services as a regional resource unit.

126. In the area of agriculture, the Philippines took pride in being able to cultivate expertise in the SIT through national, regional, and coordinated research projects. That expertise covered a range of areas from basic research to technology transfer. Her country had demonstrated the effectiveness of the SIT in lowering the population of fruit flies in a mango-growing island in the central Philippines, which had improved the competitiveness of the country's mangoes on the international market. The capability developed locally also allowed the country to receive fellows and scientific visitors from other Member States and had enabled it to send two missions to South Africa to assist in the latter's project on expanding use of the SIT against fruit pests in the Western and Northern Cape.

127. In the field of water resources management and protection, the Agency-funded project on isotope applications was gaining recognition from local water districts in the Philippines, particularly in the critical urbanized areas.

128. As a founding member of the RCA, the Philippines continued to participate actively in the RCA programme, contributing expertise in the areas of health, agriculture and the environment while enhancing its capabilities through training and scientific exchange in the industry and energy field.

129. Radiotherapy and nuclear medicine centres had been developed in the Philippines through the Agency's technical cooperation programme and the RCA programme. The country could now host training courses and send experts to and receive fellows from RCA member States and from other regions. In 2006, a second distance learning programme had been launched for 30 local nuclear medicine technologists, making use of the training materials developed under the RCA.

130. In early 2006, the Philippines had hosted a training course on cancer management which had brought together 67 radiation oncologists and 30 medical physicists who were actively involved in the management of common cancers in the region.

131. In view of the several radiotherapy facilities the country had with 3D conformal/IMRT capability, the Philippines was very interested in joining the study on 3D conformal radiotherapy and IMRT to be conducted by the Agency and the RCA.

132. The forty-ninth session of the General Conference had agreed that PACT was a priority activity in view of the alarming rise in the incidence of cancer worldwide, particularly in developing countries. The Philippines welcomed the decision of the Board of Governors to contribute part of the Nobel Peace Prize to that programme and thanked all donor States for their contributions. However, PACT still required more funds to make it operational. It was hoped that a compromise solution could be reached to allow Member States wishing to contribute to the programme to do so.

133. The Philippines endorsed the Director General's view that the Agency should focus more explicitly on energy for development. Like many countries that depended on fossil fuel for their development requirements, the Philippines knew full well the social and economic consequences of rising oil prices and energy shortages. That was why it was seeking to develop alternative sources of energy and had taken a keen interest in cooperation on energy security. It did not discount nuclear power as an energy option for the future, but that option depended upon adequate solutions to several concerns, including cost, nuclear waste disposal, security and, above all, safety. The word 'nuclear' still elicited fear in the minds of many Filipinos, especially in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident. It was therefore important that the Agency sustain its activities to improve public awareness of the safety and the developmental benefits and advantages of nuclear energy, especially among decision-makers and advocacy groups.

134. With regard to nuclear safety and security, the Philippines was fully committed to implementing the Agency's Safety Fundamentals, safety standards, safety requirements and safety guides. The country was seriously contemplating a TransSAS mission in order to receive an expert assessment of

and advice on the Philippine transport regulatory infrastructure and implementation of the Agency's transport regulations.

135. The Philippines' research reactor was being prepared for decommissioning and was being used as a demonstration site and host facility to allow technicians and experts from Member States to learn various techniques used in the decommissioning process. The country looked forward to the completion of the project.

136. Her country adhered to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and to its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. It had participated in the conference to consider and adopt amendments to the CPPNM and was working towards the ratification of those amendments. It was vital to prevent belligerent non-State actors such as terrorists from acquiring the means and materials to use nuclear and radioactive material for non-peaceful purposes.

137. The Philippines was keen to maintain high standards of safety in nuclear facilities. The ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management would remain a priority for the Philippine Government, especially given the increasing number of nuclear power plants in the Asia-Pacific region.

138. In the area of safeguards and verification, the Philippines looked forward to considering recommendations to improve further the efficiency and enhance the effectiveness of the safeguards system. That would enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate of implementing comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. The Agency played an indispensable role in ensuring that no diversion of nuclear material to non-peaceful uses occurred. The country's own additional protocol was already on the agenda of the Philippine Senate.

139. Her country had been consistent in its call for the DPRK to return to the NPT and dismantle its nuclear programme. It lent its unequivocal support to United Nations Security Council resolution 1695 (2006) calling for the resumption of the six-party talks. The ASEAN Regional Forum could also play a positive role in promoting a peaceful resolution of the issue. At the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 25 July 2006, Foreign Ministers had called for the resumption of the six-party talks. They had emphasized that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was essential to maintain peace and stability in the region and had stressed the importance of dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the issue. They had also reaffirmed ASEAN's support for the principles of the joint statement of September 2005 on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. As the Chair of ASEAN, the Philippines hoped to help move the process forward by continuing to engage the DPRK in the Forum.

140. She welcomed the start of initial discussions between Iran and the EU in Vienna a few days previously. The Iranian nuclear issue could only be solved diplomatically through dialogue and open communication and the Agency remained the appropriate forum for resolving it.

141. Fifty years previously, the founding fathers of the Agency had seen a vision of a world without nuclear weapons where the atom would be used only for peaceful purposes. Though much progress had been made in the use of nuclear technologies to improve lives, the same could not be said of non-proliferation which remained a vision. The international non-proliferation regime continued to face new challenges and efforts had to be redoubled to strengthen the institutional framework of the NPT. While it regretted the collapse of the NPT Review Conference in 2005, the Philippines remained hopeful about the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.