

# General Conference

**GC(67)/OR.2**

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## Sixty-seventh regular session

# Plenary

## Record of the Second Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Monday, 25 September 2023, at 3.05 p.m.*

**President:** Ms MANGKLATANAKUL (Thailand)

**Later:** Ms GIL (Colombia)

**Later:** Ms HOURNAU-POUËZAT (France)

**Later:** Ms MANGKLATANAKUL (Thailand)

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## Abbreviations used in this record

2030 Agenda	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
ABACC	Brazilian–Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ALPS	Advanced Liquid Processing System
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ARTEMIS	Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INES	International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
MW(e)	megawatt (electrical)
NHSI	Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative
NPP	nuclear power plant

**Abbreviations used in this record (continued)**

NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
ORPAS	Occupational Radiation Protection Appraisal Service
Paris Convention	Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Site and External Events Design
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
SQP	small quantities protocol
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

#### **4. Arrangements for the Conference (resumed)** (GC(67)/1 and Add.1 to 6)

##### **(a) Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion**

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had met earlier in the day and recommended that the agenda for the sixty-seventh regular session should consist of all items listed in document GC(67)/1, except item 2, and of all supplementary items set forth in documents GC(67)/1/Add.1 to 5. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion, it had recommended that all items be taken up for discussion as indicated in documents GC(67)/1 and Add.1 to 5. With regard to the order in which the items contained in documents GC(67)/1 and Add.1 to 5 should be discussed, the General Committee had recommended that the suggestions made in those documents should be followed.

2. She took it that the Conference agreed to adopt the agenda and allocate items as recommended by the General Committee.

3. It was so decided.

##### **(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session**

4. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the Conference should set Friday, 29 September 2023 as the closing date of its sixty-seventh regular session, and Monday, 16 September 2024 as the opening date of the sixty-eighth regular session. She took it that the Conference agreed to adopt that recommendation.

5. It was so decided.

#### **28. Examination of delegates' credentials** (GC(67)/25)

6. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had met earlier in the day as a Credentials Committee to examine the credentials of the delegation of Myanmar, as provided for in Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference. After discussion, the Committee had recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution set out in paragraph 5 of the report contained in document GC(67)/25.

7. She took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution.

8. The resolution was adopted.

## **7. General debate and Annual Report for 2022 (resumed)** (GC(67)/2)

9. Mr LEE Jong Ho (Republic of Korea) said that Member States should take the opportunity of the sixty-seventh regular session of the General Conference to recognize the importance of international cooperation in overcoming challenges and hardships and to consolidate their support for the collective global effort led by the Agency to achieve sustainable growth and a clean energy future.

10. Immediately after the new administration had taken office in May 2022, the Korean Government had set out a new energy policy framework based on the recognition that nuclear power was indispensable for achieving carbon neutrality and enhancing energy security. Over the past year, the Republic of Korea had worked to increase the share of nuclear energy in its energy mix and foster an ecosystem for the nuclear industry as a national priority. In addition, nuclear energy had been included in the Korean Green Taxonomy and was considered a national strategic technology.

11. The Republic of Korea was currently devoting its national strengths and resources to technology innovation and policy support, with a particular focus on the three core areas of future preparation, technology dissemination and technology convergence, as it stepped up its efforts towards climate response and carbon neutrality.

12. In preparing for the future, the Republic of Korea was accelerating the development of next-generation non-light water reactors, such as molten salt reactors and very high temperature reactors, and an advanced light water SMR. Moreover, it had established a system for public-private cooperation to ensure a fast response to technological challenges concerning different types of SMRs and to enhance the private sector's capabilities in that area.

13. The Republic of Korea was proactively setting a course for SMR safety regulations to advance the commercialization of such technology. In an effort to disseminate its safe nuclear technologies, his country was actively participating in the construction of new NPPs worldwide. At the same time, it planned to support nations striving to secure carbon-free energy sources by offering them technical advice on the regulations for various types of reactors.

14. As part of its efforts to promote the broader applications of nuclear technology and carbon neutrality across industries, the Republic of Korea was promoting technology convergence, including clean hydrogen production at NPPs. Furthermore, it was developing technologies that ensured the safety of nuclear facilities throughout their lifecycles, which encompassed advanced technologies for safety management at operating plants, nuclear waste management, including underground disposal research, and decommissioning.

15. As a responsible member of the global community, the Korean Government fully supported the Agency and its initiatives to enhance the contribution of nuclear technology to energy security, the environment and public health. His country provided comprehensive assistance to such core Agency initiatives as the SMR Platform and ZODIAC, and would cooperate closely with the Agency to ensure the success of the 2024 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

16. In support of the Agency's initiative to boost the career development of women professionals in the field of science and technology, the Republic of Korea would be hosting the Lise Meitner Programme in 2024. It looked forward to the support and interest of women professionals from Member States.

17. His country appreciated the Director General's excellent leadership as part of the Agency's efforts to carefully review the safety of Japan's plan to discharge contaminated water with the participation of

the international community, including a Korean expert. It expected the Agency to continue to effectively monitor whether the actual discharge was being carried out in accordance with the plan reviewed by the Agency and to share relevant information in a transparent manner.

18. The DPRK was continuing its illegal nuclear activities in violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions and had all but completed preparation for its seventh nuclear test. In September 2022, Pyongyang had promulgated its new law on nuclear policy, establishing the most arbitrary and aggressive nuclear doctrine in the world. It was even openly threatening pre-emptive nuclear strikes against the Republic of Korea.

19. The Republic of Korea sincerely appreciated the efforts of the Director General and Agency staff members with regard to Zaporizhzhya NPP, including the establishment and operation of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya.

20. The year 2023 marked the 70th anniversary of the motto ‘Atoms for Peace’, on which the Agency had been founded. Member States had worked with the Agency to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Republic of Korea was firmly committed to supporting the Secretariat’s leadership in its endeavours to create a safer, cleaner and better future.

21. Mr EL-MARKABI (Egypt) said that, given the current turbulent international events and exceptional circumstances, which cast a shadow over the Agency’s work, the Secretariat and Member States had an even greater responsibility to work together in a manner consistent with the Agency’s technical mandate to ensure credibility and non-discrimination and avoid politicization and polarization.

22. Affirming its full support for the Agency, Egypt hoped to see the return of the Vienna spirit of consensus at the General Conference and to avoid a repetition of the disagreements that had arisen during the sixty-sixth regular session. The mounting challenges to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes required complete and effective international solidarity and the political will to ward off any future rifts.

23. Fully convinced of the Agency’s central role in harnessing atoms for peace and development, Egypt had endeavoured to provide all forms of support to the Agency over the preceding year. That role had been evident during the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022, at which, for the first time and on a par with organizations dealing with other renewable energy sources, the Agency had had its own pavilion to promote the key role of nuclear energy in reducing carbon emissions.

24. In addition, in 2023, Egypt and Belgium had co-chaired the successful negotiations on the Agency’s budget for the forthcoming biennium, with a general consensus having been reached on all budget items despite the complex and deteriorating global economic situation and widespread political polarization. That collective achievement by Member States and the Secretariat would provide the Agency with the necessary financial stability and enable it to plan effectively.

25. Despite the crucial role of the TCF in promoting the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to States, its seriously limited resources simply could not meet the growing aspirations of developing countries with regard to harnessing nuclear energy to achieve the SDGs, thereby lessening the opportunities for NPT States Parties to realize their inalienable right to conduct research into nuclear energy production and the development of peaceful uses. It was high time that the TCF’s structural problem was addressed.

26. Over the previous year, Egypt had continued its direct and productive cooperation and dialogue with the Agency on its project to build the four-unit El-Dabaa NPP. Having verified that all the technical documentation complied with the highest standards of safety and security, the Egyptian Nuclear and

Radiological Regulatory Authority had granted construction permission for all four units, and work was expected to proceed with unprecedented speed.

27. Egypt had completed its national procedures to ratify the CNS and had deposited its instrument of ratification with the Director General during the current session of the General Conference.

28. Egypt was committed to full transparency and close cooperation with the Agency in the implementation of its NPP project and all other peaceful nuclear activities, in accordance with its total commitment to the NPT and its CSA. Underscoring the voluntary nature of the additional protocol — an instrument complementary to a CSA and concluded by sovereign decision — his country completely rejected the imposition of the additional protocol as a prerequisite for enhancing cooperation on peaceful uses. Such a requirement would run counter to the principles and text of the NPT and the outcomes of NPT Review Conferences.

29. Taking a keen interest in education and training in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Egypt had established the Advanced Technical School for Nuclear Energy Technology in El-Dabaa, with the first cohort having graduated in 2022. Stressing the need to promote regional cooperation within the Agency, he expressed his country's eagerness to make its expertise, qualified professionals and research facilities available to regional programmes on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology through the Arab Atomic Energy Agency and AFRA. Egypt hoped to establish a regional nuclear training and education centre, in coordination with the Agency, with a view to transferring technology for peaceful uses to States in Africa and the Middle East. To that end, it called for enhanced Agency support and cooperation in establishing the centre, which would help make Egypt a regional hub for nuclear training and education and would facilitate the international exchange of expertise.

30. The universalization of the comprehensive safeguards system was an essential step towards establishing an NWFZ in the Middle East. To that end, Egypt would again propose a draft resolution on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, in a continued effort to rid the region of nuclear weapons. Egypt looked forward to a proposal from the Director General setting out a new vision for progress on the implementation of the resolution in the light of regional and international developments.

31. In that context, Egypt welcomed the positive outcomes of the first three sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and looked forward to the fourth session, to be held in November 2023. The conference had gained increasing momentum as an important negotiating track for implementing the resolution of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, especially as it was a sincere attempt to negotiate a treaty on ridding the Middle East of WMDs that would address the concerns of all parties while observing the principle of consensus. Egypt looked forward to the Secretariat playing a greater technical role in discussions at the conference.

32. In closing, he expressed his country's sincere appreciation for the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to serve Member States and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and affirmed its commitment to supporting the Director General's initiatives in that regard, in particular Rays of Hope.

**Ms Gil (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.**

33. Mr MANSUROV (Uzbekistan) said that the Agency continued to provide valuable support and assistance to countries in the safe and sustainable use of nuclear science and technology for the common good. His country recognized the importance of the Agency's work in accessing peaceful nuclear science and technology to improve people's living standards, health and wellbeing.

34. The Republic of Uzbekistan was grateful to the Agency for its cooperation and support in improving radiation and nuclear safety in the country and region. It was pleased to note successful national projects related to the development of nuclear infrastructure, nuclear medicine, the safe



operation of a nuclear research reactor and the improvement of educational laboratories. His country was satisfied with its successful cooperation with all Agency departments, which was being strengthened every year.

35. The Republic of Uzbekistan was proud to have been one of the first countries to implement the COMPASS pilot project, which had significantly strengthened its cooperation in the field of nuclear safeguards. The conduct of INIR, SEED and imPACT missions and the implementation of a comprehensive work plan for cooperation in the development of Uzbekistan's nuclear infrastructure, technology transfer in the field of radiotherapy and cancer treatment, nuclear medicine, medical visualization and many other capacity-building programmes demonstrated his country's commitment to the responsible development and use of nuclear energy.

36. Uzbekistan's involvement in INPRO and the participation of the Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Agency's Internet Reactor Laboratory Project were evidence that it had increased its cooperation efforts. Moreover, Uzbekistan's progress in establishing a nuclear power programme, strengthening safety measures, investing in human resources, conducting research and participating in international cooperation made it a new player in the field of nuclear energy.

37. The Agency's active response to the needs of Member States and its readiness to provide support in various areas of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were highly appreciated. The publication of documents, the organization of expert missions and the holding of workshops and technical meetings in countries were important steps in that direction.

38. Uzbekistan valued long-term cooperation with other Member States in the field of nuclear energy and technology, which promoted progress and safety. In the belief that each Member State should have an equal opportunity to participate fully in all Agency decision-making bodies, Uzbekistan called for the restoration of sovereign equality in the Agency, which would allow countries to actively influence the Agency's decisions and direction of development, thereby ensuring more effective and representative management within the Agency.

39. Through its active support for nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons, Uzbekistan demonstrated its commitment to global security and compliance with obligations. However, it was necessary to be aware of the existing threats and challenges associated with nuclear safety. Cooperation with the Agency was a key factor in ensuring nuclear safety and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. States must work together to overcome the threats and challenges associated with nuclear safety and strive for a bright future where nuclear energy was used for the benefit of sustainable development and the wellbeing of all peoples.

40. Uzbekistan was grateful for the Agency's continued support and cooperation and was committed to expanding and strengthening its partnership in the peaceful and safe uses of nuclear energy.

41. Mr ALMONTE (Dominican Republic), expressing his country's support for the Director General's excellent leadership and its confidence in the impartiality, professionalism and technical capabilities of the Agency, especially in the areas of nuclear security and the development and application of nuclear science for peaceful purposes, said that the work of the Director General was all the more laudable given the challenges faced during his tenure. In the light of the worsening geopolitical situation, the Dominican Republic recalled the words of the UN Secretary-General, who had called on world leaders to avoid fragmenting international order and to protect the planet against climate change.

42. For decades, the Dominican Republic had been cooperating with the Agency in such important areas as radiotherapy for cancer, nuclear medicine, isotope hydrology, non-destructive testing for

industrial purposes, agricultural applications, environmental studies and energy planning, all of which were essential for building development capacity in what was a small nation with limited resources.

43. In recent years, his country had further bolstered that cooperation, having signed a CPF, increased its training provision and, most recently, begun construction of a cancer hospital in the southern region — the most deprived in the country — under the framework of Rays of Hope. The Agency had mobilized funding from the Government and the Dominican League Against Cancer to purchase the site for the hospital and fund its construction. The Agency would also help to provide radiotherapy equipment and training.

44. Similarly, in cooperation with the Agency, the Dominican Republic had launched the first phase of the construction of a secondary standards dosimetry laboratory with the aim of ensuring that radiation techniques, performed to international standards of quality and safety, were reliably available throughout the country. The Dominican Republic ultimately hoped to be able to provide support to other countries in the Caribbean and Central America region that were in need of certified dosimetry calibration services. The cooperation provided by the Agency in strengthening his country's technical capacities in the nuclear field was greatly appreciated.

45. With a view to further developing those capacities, the Dominican Republic had expressed great interest in participating in the Regional Network of Research Reactors and Related Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

46. The Dominican Republic welcomed new technologies and research in the areas of nutrition, in particular regarding the role of energy metabolism in obesity prevention, the relationship between breast milk intake and breastfeeding practices, and the development of minimally invasive techniques to evaluate protein digestibility and utilization in the diets of vulnerable populations. It hoped to see further progress made in the use of new generation reactors to produce drinking water economically. In addition to Atoms4Food, the Agency's work in those areas was highly relevant to the Dominican Republic.

47. A key area of the Dominican Republic's cooperation with the Agency was capacity development. The country was particularly supportive of the Agency's initiatives to encourage women's participation in the nuclear field, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme. It would continue to support all policies to promote gender equality.

48. The Dominican Republic had recently fulfilled several important administrative and diplomatic requirements set out by the Agency, including meeting certain long-standing commitments. As a result, it had regained voting rights within the Agency, which would give it the opportunity to demonstrate even greater commitment to and participation in the organization's work.

49. With regard to regional cooperation, he highlighted the support received by his country through its participation in ARCAL projects.

50. Lastly, expressing the hope that, at its current session, the General Conference would make progress towards the continued development of nuclear science for peaceful purposes, the improved distribution of resources and greater environmental protection for the benefit of all, he reiterated his country's commitment to the Agency, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the shared values of the international community.

51. Mr YASIR (Iraq), thanking the Director General for his valuable efforts and congratulating him on his reappointment, said that his country affirmed the legitimate right of States to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology to strengthen their economic, health and development programmes and to support plans for future energy diversification to achieve the SDGs. His Government had passed a number of laws to that end, including the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission Act, which it was now working to implement.

52. Iraq continued to cooperate constructively with the Agency to build national capacities in all peaceful nuclear applications by participating in the Agency's TC programmes, providing training and development opportunities for young people, and approving numerous national and regional projects. Praising the efforts of the Department of Technical Cooperation, he expressed his country's hope that it would continue receiving Agency support through TC programmes in order to promote the peaceful and safe uses of nuclear technology.

53. The Iraqi authorities were working with the Department of Technical Cooperation to build national capacities to combat both communicable and chronic diseases, in particular cancer. Iraq thanked the Agency for conducting an impACT review, including a full cancer control survey, in cooperation with WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and welcomed the associated report, issued in late 2022, which identified priority areas and provided recommendations that would help Iraq design and implement its national cancer control programme. Praising ZODIAC, Iraq welcomed ongoing work to equip Member States' national laboratories, nominate national ZODIAC coordinators and contribute the necessary diagnostic equipment, and looked forward to working further with the Agency in that regard.

54. The national executive and regulatory authorities had devised an integrated programme of action to eliminate radiation contamination in Iraq, in addition to national strategies for the management of radioactive waste, including waste from naturally occurring radioactive material. With expertise gained through TC projects, Iraq had conducted operations to eliminate radioactive contamination in several governorates in southern Iraq, thereby boosting the Government's tireless efforts to safely dispose of radioactive waste from nuclear installations, medical centres and oil facilities.

55. Iraq commended the Agency and the European Union for their support and assistance in building urgently needed facilities for the definitive burial of radioactive waste in several regions of the country. A site selection study and the necessary designs and plans for building permanent radioactive waste landfill facilities had been prepared under a contract previously concluded with the European Union. Iraq hoped that it would continue to receive the necessary assistance to construct those facilities, as they were crucial for protecting people and the environment from the negative impact of radioactive waste.

56. Cooperating directly and productively with the Agency, Iraq's national authorities had cleaned up 80 per cent of the nuclear installations at the Al Tuwaitha site, with only the core of the Tammuz 14 reactor remaining. Iraq hoped that the Agency would continue to provide support to remove the reactor core — the biggest challenge yet.

57. Iraq had a safeguards agreement and was fully committed to ensuring the highest level of transparency, in full compliance with international non-proliferation treaties and conventions. As one of the first Member States to ratify the NPT, Iraq called on States that had not yet signed a safeguards agreement to do so, to comply with all the provisions of the NPT and the decisions pertaining to it, and to work closely with the Agency. His country considered the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East — the basis of the indefinite extension of the NPT — to be the fourth pillar of the Treaty and the mainstay of efforts to strengthen regional and international peace and security. Moreover, that resolution was an important step towards establishing a Middle East NWFZ and represented a turning point in the attention paid to the Middle East at NPT Review Conferences.

58. In conclusion, Iraq looked forward to the General Conference producing successful outcomes that would enhance cooperation among Member States for the optimal and peaceful use of nuclear technology and applications in service of humanity, peace and international nuclear security and safety.

59. Mr BAYRAKTAR (Türkiye) said that he greatly appreciated the Agency's delivery of emergency assistance under the TC programme in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes in his country.

Moreover, he was sincerely grateful to the Director General and the Agency for their dedication to ensuring nuclear safety and security in the region through intense diplomatic efforts.

60. Türkiye's top priorities in the energy sector included the development of sustainable energy policies. Nuclear energy would play a vital role in reaching carbon neutrality by the year 2053. For that reason, Türkiye attached great importance to increasing the share of renewable energy sources and to continuing its efforts to include nuclear power in its energy mix as a base-load clean source of power.

61. Türkiye's first conventional large-scale NPP, located in Akkuyu, was currently the largest NPP construction site in the world. The first reactor was planned to be commissioned by the end of 2024. His country was grateful to the Director General for his attendance at the ceremony marking the first nuclear fuel delivery to the NPP on 27 April 2023. In accordance with the country's long-term national energy plan, Türkiye aimed to add 7.2 GW of nuclear energy capacity to its energy mix by the end of 2035, and over 20 GW of nuclear capacity by the end of 2050. Türkiye had also been following developments in SMRs and hoped to include SMRs in its energy mix.

62. Türkiye had so far hosted five peer review and advisory service missions, including an IRRS mission in September 2022 to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the country's regulatory framework. It appreciated the Agency's mobilization of the core team across all departments and planned technical assistance through the Integrated Work Plan and TC projects. In addition, Türkiye was undertaking various activities under its national TC projects for ensuring the safe use of nuclear technology and ionizing radiation.

63. Türkiye was dedicated to working closely with the Agency to support the highest standards in nuclear safety, security and safeguards so as to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. By ratifying the Joint Convention and the 2004 Protocol to Amend the Paris Convention in 2022, Türkiye had become party to all international conventions on nuclear safety and security and submitted compliance reports on a regular basis.

64. Ms SCEPANOVIC (Montenegro) said that, throughout its history, the Agency had made an incalculable contribution to global peace, security and scientific development. The Agency's response to the grave challenges currently facing the world served as proof of its value and of the indispensable role that it played in a wide range of areas, including health, food, the energy crisis, climate change and geopolitical stability and security, most notably in Ukraine.

65. The continuous threats to nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine, especially at the illegally seized Zaporizhzhya NPP, and the devastating consequences of a potential nuclear accident were extremely worrying. Montenegro unequivocally condemned the unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine and called on the Russian Federation to implement the relevant Board resolutions and to stop violating the core norms of international law and international humanitarian law.

66. Commending the Director General and the Agency's staff for the bravery and commitment shown since the first days of the Russian Federation's brutal aggression, Montenegro expressed its full support for the Agency's presence and work at all nuclear sites in Ukraine and reiterated its commitment to the Director General's five principles to help ensure nuclear safety and security at Zaporizhzhya ZNPP in order to prevent a nuclear accident and to ensure the integrity of the plant.

67. The mandate, structures and platforms of the Agency, together with its vast body of regulatory norms, standards and guidelines, its technical assistance programmes and its laboratories — which Montenegro had supported both politically and financially through ReNuAL — were central to the Agency's work. Above all, the Agency relied on its scientific, managerial and administrative staff, who worked with the utmost professionalism and expert rigour to deliver results in an unbiased, objective

and independent manner. Montenegro highly appreciated their tireless dedication, which was essential for ensuring safety and security. In that connection, the speed with which the Member States had reached agreement on the reappointment of the Director General was a testament to his skills, commitment, passion and boldness. Montenegro had full confidence in his work and guidance.

68. As a small, non-nuclear-weapon State, Montenegro had benefited substantively from its fruitful cooperation with the Agency within the framework of the Agency's comprehensive and wide-ranging technical assistance programmes. The CPF signed between Montenegro and the Agency for the period 2022–2027 had defined new priorities and deepened the country's cooperation with the Agency.

69. As a constitutionally ecological State and a promoter of sustainable development, Montenegro remained committed to providing unequivocal support to the Agency during current and future TC cycles, especially in the context of ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics and Rays of Hope. In that connection, it welcomed the recent launch of Atoms4Food, which would further exemplify how strong partnerships and synergies among international organizations could bring the most added value for Member States. Montenegro was also committed to the Agency's gender equality initiatives and stood ready to host Agency-supported events in that sphere.

70. Montenegro remained strongly committed to the full implementation and universalization of the multilateral regime for disarmament and non-proliferation. As a State party to all major Agency conventions and other relevant international instruments, it strove to meet the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

71. In such unprecedented times, international cooperation was more important than ever. He assured the Agency of his delegation's full support during the General Conference's session.

72. Mr GALUSHCHENKO (Ukraine) said that nuclear power — associated with reliability, a low carbon footprint and energy security — was one of humanity's greatest achievements. For a successful nuclear renaissance, new units needed to be built, new technologies needed to be developed, and, crucially, a new generation of keen nuclear professionals needed to be trained.

73. In killing the children of Ukraine, the Russian Federation was attacking the future of nuclear power. It had so far killed more than 500 children, including a young resident of Zaporizhzhya who had been born to a family of engineers and who had dreamed of becoming one himself. On 9 October 2023, he and several other children had been killed by a Russian missile, and several more had been injured. Children who would have become nuclear engineers and scientists would now never have that opportunity.

74. During the Chernobyl disaster, some 200 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land and some 8.5 million people had been exposed to extensive radiation. The consequences of the disaster had been felt as far away as Sweden and Finland. The disaster at the Chernobyl NPP had involved just one reactor, however. Zaporizhzhya NPP had six. Any major nuclear accident at Zaporizhzhya NPP would affect millions of kilometres of land and tens of millions of people around the world. With the plant having already experienced seven blackouts as a result of shelling, it was unclear how many more blackouts it could weather before a nuclear accident occurred.

75. Moreover, even a small accident at the plant would put a halt not only to the renaissance of nuclear energy but perhaps even to the entire nuclear sphere. The consequences would be felt beyond Ukraine and almost certainly beyond Europe. The future of the nuclear renaissance was being decided in Ukraine.

76. In the light of deliberate violations of the basic principles of nuclear safety and security by the Russian Federation — one of the Agency's own Member States — Ukraine was grateful for the support shown by Member States on the topic of Zaporizhzhya NPP. To date, the Russian Federation had completely failed to comply with the Board's resolution calling on it to immediately cease all actions

against, and at, Zaporizhzhya NPP and all other nuclear facilities in Ukraine and to allow the competent Ukrainian authorities to regain full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, including Zaporizhzhya NPP, so as to ensure their safe and secure operation.

77. He expressed his country's thanks to the Director General for his tremendous efforts to improve the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP and to the Agency's experts for their brave presence there and at other plants in Ukraine, which was making a significant contribution to nuclear security in Europe. The report produced following the first visit by Agency experts to Zaporizhzhya NPP had provided an accurate picture of events at the site and confirmed the violation of all seven of the Director General's indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict.

78. The situation was unlikely to resolve itself. Urgent action was required. Ukraine, of course, favoured the full de-occupation of Zaporizhzhya NPP. While working with Agency experts in that regard, he had come to the realization that the Agency required greater power as an organization. All Seven Pillars needed to be restored, and a demilitarized zone was needed around the plant. The international community would be unable to advance its nuclear ambitions if it could not guarantee nuclear safety and security.

79. Thanking countries for the solidarity that they had shown with Ukraine, he said that their support was felt through the positions that they had taken in various international forums. Ukraine encouraged all Member States to participate in discussions on the peace formula proposed by the Ukrainian President, the first item of which was achieving nuclear and radiation safety. Solutions must be found if the nuclear field was to continue its peaceful development.

80. Mr AFRIYIE (Ghana), congratulating the Director General on his reappointment for a second term, said that his country was grateful to the Agency and its development partners for the technical and financial assistance provided in the areas of agriculture, nuclear energy, health, industry, the environment and human resource capacity development in support of Ghana's economic growth and development, and it hoped that such cooperation would continue.

81. Ghana's efforts to implement its nuclear power programme were progressing steadily. It had issued a follow-up request for information from prospective vendors, with a focus on the financial details. The responses and the associated assessment report would be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration, and a decision was expected by the end of 2023.

82. Activities under the Agency's TC programme continued to shape the competencies and skills of Ghana's nuclear regulator and operator, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, thereby providing support to the Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organization. Furthermore, with the support of the Division for Africa, Ghana had been able to procure a thermal hydraulic loop through a government cost-sharing mechanism, which would support the efficient training of postgraduates in nuclear engineering and related disciplines. As it moved into the second phase of its nuclear programme, Ghana would continue to adhere to the Milestones approach to ensure that international best practices were implemented.

83. Ghana had renewed its bilateral technical cooperation with the USA and Japan with a view to building its industrial nuclear capacities and supporting infrastructure development. Ghana's nuclear programme also benefited from academic opportunities provided by other advanced nuclear countries, such as the Republic of Korea, China and the Russian Federation.

84. As any nuclear power programme required a strong commitment to radiation safety and the continuous improvement thereof, Ghana had taken steps to improve its radiation protection programme, including by upgrading and expanding its secondary standards dosimetry laboratory in order to ensure the safety of nuclear and radiation technologies as required for the socioeconomic development of Ghana

and its West African neighbours. Ghana stood ready to share the expertise it had gained in the area of radioactive waste management with other Member States.

85. In collaboration with other State institutions, Ghana had initiated radon gas monitoring programmes at workplaces and in underground mines to ensure the safety of workers and to help develop reference levels for radon gas.

86. Like many other countries, Ghana faced a problem of plastic waste. It therefore welcomed the timely launch of NUTEC Plastics, which was providing technical support and helping to build human resource capacity to conduct research into recycling and microplastic monitoring in the country. Furthermore, the marine laboratory operated by the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission had been designated a regional laboratory for microplastic monitoring in the marine environment under the initiative.

87. Many West African countries, including Ghana, were facing a shortage of modern cancer treatment facilities, which restricted access to care. Despite having a population of 30 million people, Ghana had only three radiotherapy centres, one of which was privately owned. To improve cancer care, the Agency's technical input would be required during the review of Ghana's national cancer control programme. Ghana had already increased its training capacity for cancer care professionals and radiation oncologists, and, under the Sustained Dialogue for Peaceful Uses, it had recently collaborated with CRDF Global, the US Department of State, the UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Agency to host a three-event series on improving access to radiation medicine in West Africa.

88. Ghana had continued to benefit from ZODIAC, especially during the outbreak of anthrax in northern parts of the country.

89. In cooperation with the Agency, Ghana had introduced a comprehensive, holistic programme of mutant cassava cultivars and precision drip irrigation systems for soil management, thanks to which cassava yields had increased substantially, from 21 to 70 tons per hectare.

90. The potential of food irradiation to address challenges in global food systems — and, in turn, contribute to food security, safety, sustainability and trade — could not be overemphasized. Ghana would continue to value the Agency's support in acquiring an irradiation facility for food preservation with a view to reducing post-harvest losses. Furthermore, it was pleased to announce that the Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute established by the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission had been designated a Collaborating Centre for mutation breeding and related technologies for sustainable food and nutrition security.

91. Ghana continued to actively champion the agenda of Women in Nuclear Ghana, which was aimed at mobilizing and supporting the involvement of women in the various nuclear-related fields. The Agency was encouraged to enhance its collaboration with Ghana's School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences in that regard.

92. In closing, he reiterated his country's continued support for the Agency in the discharge of its statutory duties and encouraged it, in turn, to continue supporting Ghana in the application of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for the benefit of sustainable development.

93. Mr ANWAR (Pakistan), congratulating the Director General on his reappointment, said that his country strongly supported the Agency's continued provision of assistance to Member States in their efforts to meet development challenges through the safe, secure and sustainable use of nuclear science and technology, in line with its motto of 'Atoms for Peace and Development'.

94. Having benefited significantly from the Agency's assistance, Pakistan was making effective use of nuclear science and technology in a range of areas, including human health, food and agriculture,

power generation, industry and environmental protection. The Director General's visit to Pakistan in 2023 had provided impetus to efforts to further strengthen the mutually beneficial and decades-long collaboration between Pakistan and the Agency.

95. The use of nuclear technology in the human health sector was a national priority for Pakistan. The 19 cancer hospitals run by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission played a vital role in providing high-quality treatment to more than 80 per cent of the country's cancer patients. During his visit to Pakistan, the Director General had inaugurated the first CyberKnife facility at the Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute in Islamabad, which itself had been designated a regional anchor centre under Rays of Hope.

96. Pakistan was successfully employing nuclear technologies to enhance food security and agricultural productivity through its four agriculture and biotechnology centres, one of which — the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology — had been designated a Collaborating Centre and was part of the ZODIAC laboratory network. The Institute had seen success in producing coloured cotton and was working on large-scale production.

97. Despite being an energy deficient country and accounting for less than 1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan was one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world. As an affordable, reliable and clean source of energy, nuclear power had an indispensable role to play in mitigating and adapting to climate change and facilitating the transition to a low-carbon energy future.

98. Pakistan had decades of experience in the operation of a safe, secure and fully safeguarded nuclear power programme. It possessed six operational NPPs with an aggregate capacity of 3530 MW(e) and was seeking to further increase the share of nuclear power in its national energy mix. Work had already begun on the construction of another NPP, Chashma Unit 5, which would have 1200 MW(e) capacity.

99. As a leading partner in the Agency's TC programme, Pakistan had benefited significantly from such cooperation and stood ready to share its experience of designing and implementing comprehensive TC projects with other developing Member States. The signing of practical arrangements between Pakistan and the Department of Technical Cooperation was a manifestation of that commitment.

100. Pakistan accorded the highest priority to nuclear safety and security as a national responsibility. Party to several leading international instruments on nuclear safety and security, Pakistan had instituted a comprehensive, robust and rigorously enforced nuclear safety and security regime in accordance with the highest international standards. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority was an independent national agency that ensured compliance with the applicable standards at nuclear installations and radiation facilities throughout the country. As a reflection of Pakistan's expertise in that vital area, its National Institute of Safety and Security had been designated a Collaborating Centre for nuclear security training. In addition, the Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security had also become a regional and international hub for imparting high-quality nuclear security training. Pakistan looked forward to close cooperation between that centre and the Agency's Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre in Seibersdorf.

101. Pakistan supported the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, under which several fellows were pursuing degree programmes at the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences — another Collaborating Centre, and was committed to further enhancing its mutually beneficial cooperation with the Agency and supporting its role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, in accordance with its mandate.

**Ms Hournau-Pouëzat (France), Vice-President, took the Chair.**



102. Mr BACHIYSKI (Bulgaria) conveyed his country's congratulations to the Director General on his reappointment and its gratitude for his decisive leadership and for the courage and determination displayed by the Agency's staff during such turbulent times, especially in Ukraine.

103. The severe threats posed to nuclear safety, security and safeguards by the Russian Federation's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine were gravely worrying. The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion had prevented the Agency from safely conducting full safeguards verification activities in Ukraine and had significantly increased the risk of a nuclear accident. Bulgaria strongly condemned such dangerous and irresponsible behaviour. Supportive of the role of the Agency in Ukraine, Bulgaria called for the full implementation of the Director General's Seven Pillars and five principles in order to ensure nuclear safety and security and the implementation of the safeguards system in Ukraine. It urged the Russian Federation to stop its illegal war, abide by its international commitments and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

104. Bulgaria remained strongly committed to efforts to further strengthen and advance the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The Agency's safeguards system was a fundamental component of that regime and a necessary guarantee for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Efforts must continue to be made to further enhance the system's effectiveness and efficiency, in particular through the universalization of the CSA and additional protocol as the verification standard.

105. In that connection, his country called upon Iran to urgently and effectively fulfil its legal obligations under its CSA and subsidiary arrangements, to resume its implementation of the additional protocol and to engage with the Agency constructively and in a spirit of cooperation, including by clarifying all outstanding safeguards issues without delay.

106. Given the deeply worrisome continuation of the DPRK's nuclear programme, Bulgaria welcomed the Agency's commitment to monitor the situation. It called on the DPRK to comply with its international obligations by immediately abandoning all its nuclear weapon, WMD and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; to return to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT and the Agency's safeguards system as a non-nuclear-weapon State; to sign and ratify the CTBT; and to cease all ballistic missile systems testing.

107. He reiterated his country's full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as agreed by the NPT States Parties.

108. Commending Japan for its cooperative and transparent approach to its planned release of treated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP, he voiced his country's backing for the Agency's real-time monitoring of the process to ensure that it remained in full conformity with international safety standards.

109. Bulgaria attached great importance to nuclear power and its applications in the context of achieving a carbon-neutral economy. Nuclear power remained prominent in Bulgaria, which continued to pursue the use of advanced technology, high production efficiency and strong nuclear safety, security and radiation protection.

110. The safety and security of nuclear facilities were essential to the development of nuclear energy. Throughout 2022, Units 5 and 6 of Kozloduy NPP had continued to operate in full compliance with international safety standards. Activities were under way to ensure the safe long-term operation of the units, as confirmed by the SALTO follow-up mission to Bulgaria in 2023. Furthermore, in approving Bulgaria's national report, the Joint Eighth and Ninth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS had acknowledged the country's strong commitment to its obligations under the CNS.

111. Bulgaria commended the Agency for playing a proactive role in the areas of nuclear safety and security, through projects and initiatives such as the SMR Regulators' Forum and the SMR Platform. His country was participating in the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative and trusted the Secretariat to steer the process towards achieving tangible results in the near future.

112. As knowledge management and capacity-building were key elements of the safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities, Bulgaria supported the Agency's initiatives to promote the sustainability of education and training in all areas of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For its part, Bulgaria had adopted a national strategy on human resources development in the nuclear sector and had brought an initial three-year action plan for its implementation into force.

113. He expressed his country's strong support for the TC programme, which was the key mechanism for transferring technology, building capacities and improving nuclear safety and security with a view to addressing a broad range of socioeconomic human development needs in Member States. Bulgaria encouraged the Agency to continue to render support to all Member States upon their request, according to their needs and on the basis of non-discriminatory principles.

114. As part of the TC programme for 2022–2023, Bulgaria was successfully implementing three national projects in the fields of radiation protection, knowledge management and agriculture and was participating in more than 30 regional and interregional projects. Every year, Bulgaria paid its annual contribution to the TCF in full and on time. It also made financial contributions to ZODIAC.

115. In closing, he reiterated his country's desire to continue serving as a constructive partner in all Agency activities and to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Agency's main objectives: ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhancing nuclear safety and security, and widening the scope of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

116. Mr MOLINA ORTIZ (Plurinational State of Bolivia), congratulating the Director General on his second term, said that his country recognized the important work of the Agency ensuring compliance with international obligations, encouraging the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology and promoting nuclear non-proliferation. Bolivia was particularly committed to that last aim, having ratified the NPT and accepted safeguards in line with its international commitments.

117. Under the leadership of its President, Bolivia sought to collectively build a society free from inequality and poverty, where all people could live a good life in harmony with the environment. The industrialization of national resources — which was synonymous with progress and energy diversification — was fundamental to productivity, which, in turn, would help create jobs and better living conditions for all residents of Bolivia and support holistic development.

118. The development of human resources and of nuclear science and technology was helping to achieve industrialization in Bolivia, to which end the Agency's TC programme had provided support in various areas. Conscious of the importance of nuclear technology to development, Bolivia was successfully implementing a nuclear programme of its own with the aim of promoting, managing, implementing and disseminating the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and supporting the industrial, health, agricultural, food and water management sectors.

119. To that end, Bolivia had established the Centre for Nuclear Technology Research and Development, which would support industrial development and domestic research. It was also building a network of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy centres to facilitate early diagnosis and treatment of cancer; as of 2023, two of the three planned centres had begun providing free care, benefiting more than 17 300 individuals. The third centre, located in La Paz, was expected to open before long. Furthermore, Bolivia had begun to produce radiopharmaceuticals at its cyclotron complex in order to meet national demand and to supply the regional market. It also planned to bring into operation its multipurpose

irradiation plant, which would provide technological services to the production sector for quality control and help open up new export markets. In addition, Bolivia was making progress in the construction of its first nuclear research reactor, which would be adapted to the extreme altitude conditions in the country. Moreover, as nuclear energy must be used responsibly, Bolivia was taking steps to strengthen its nuclear regulator in cooperation with the Agency.

120. Bolivia remained committed to working with the Agency to promote activities to ensure nuclear security and safeguards for the benefit of Member States.

121. Mr RASMUSSEN (Denmark) said that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine had once again set the scene for the General Conference. Underscoring the need to ensure the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, Denmark urged the Russian Federation to withdraw all personnel from Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP.

122. Denmark fully supported the Agency's important work in Ukraine and had decided to make a voluntary financial contribution to the Agency for that purpose. Expressing his country's great appreciation to the Agency's staff, especially those who were working in challenging circumstances in Ukraine, he thanked the Director General for establishing the five principles for nuclear safety and security at Zaporizhzhya NPP and called for their implementation, with full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

123. Wholeheartedly backing the work of the Agency — and in particular the safeguards system — Denmark welcomed the many contributions made to the fields of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

124. His country was nonetheless deeply concerned at Iran's lack of cooperation with the Agency. It urged Iran to uphold its obligations and provide the necessary information. Iran's continued expansion of its nuclear activities, which lacked a credible civilian purpose, was also worrying. The Agency's verification activities were clearly as important as ever.

125. Given the evident shared interest in promoting nuclear safety and security, the international community looked to the Agency to provide standards and guidance in that area — standards which must evolve to keep pace with technological developments.

126. Keen to ensure that the Agency was able to assist Member States in improving nuclear security at the national level, Denmark remained a significant contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund. The Agency's heavy reliance on voluntary contributions was regrettable, however. Denmark called for adequate resources to be allocated to such activities from the Regular Budget.

127. Denmark was grateful for the Agency's ongoing monitoring of the release of treated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP. The Agency's monitoring showcased the importance of its impartial and fact-based work and complemented the transparency shown by Japan.

128. Noting that Denmark had pledged its full share of the TCF funding target for 2024 in order to foster development and growth, he said that, as the international community faced up to the challenges of the current security environment, it needed not less multilateralism and international cooperation but more. Denmark therefore thanked the Director General and the Agency's dedicated staff for their invaluable contribution to building a safer and more prosperous world.

129. Mr BECCARI (San Marino) said that his country believed firmly in the essential role of the Agency and commended the Director General and all his staff for their capable, immediate and effective work. It also thanked the Agency for strengthening nuclear safety and security throughout the world and for continuing to foster peaceful applications of nuclear technology in cancer research, obesity management, human and animal health, agriculture, climate change mitigation and water quality. In

particular, San Marino praised the contribution of NUTEC Plastics in helping to eliminate plastic pollution and expressed appreciation for the work carried out at the Seibersdorf Laboratories, especially through ZODIAC, to help States around the world tackle current and future challenges.

130. Control over nuclear facilities was absolutely essential — a fact that was all the more relevant in Ukraine, where the situation remained high-risk. Emphasizing that respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States was a fundamental principle enshrined in international law, San Marino reiterated its condemnation of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and appealed to all parties to find peace as soon as possible through dialogue and diplomacy. The strength of a country resided not in its armaments and capacity for violence but in its ability to establish cooperation and friendship with its neighbours.

131. Once again, San Marino voiced its concerns regarding the lack of willingness shown by certain States to cooperate with the Agency. It appealed to them to meet their commitments, given the fundamental importance of the safeguards system for international security.

132. San Marino was a neutral country; it did not possess an army, any WMDs or even any NPPs. It was nonetheless party to the most important disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, which were certain to help bring the world closer to the final elimination of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. It encouraged all countries to consider signing and ratifying those important instruments with a view to reaching that goal.

133. Mr BORG (Malta) said that, in the face of the complex and challenging global environment, the international community must prioritize disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control and must avoid a nuclear arms race. In that context, the TPNW, to which Malta was an original signatory, held renewed importance. Malta urged all nations to become signatories to the TPNW and expressed his country's strong support for the role of the Agency and the Director General in maintaining global peace and security through the Treaty.

134. Diplomacy and multilateralism remained the best tools for navigating such challenges. As a current member of the UN Security Council, Malta was committed to upholding the rules-based international order.

135. Malta commended the Agency for its dedication to addressing the situation in Ukraine, where the ongoing conflict posed a nuclear threat, and appreciated the Agency's efforts to secure Zaporizhzhya NPP. He pledged his country's full support, including financial assistance, to the Agency's vital work in the area of nuclear security.

136. Expressing support for negotiations to resolve the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear power programme, Malta emphasized the need for Iran to reverse its nuclear escalation.

137. The DPRK's illegal launches of ballistic missiles and its other nuclear-related activities posed a serious threat to international peace and security. Malta called strongly on the DPRK to return to full compliance with the NPT, its CSA and the additional protocol and to sign and ratify the CTBT. Malta supported all diplomatic efforts in pursuit of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

138. In the midst of various global crises, the Agency remained a beacon of hope. Malta valued the support provided through the TC programme in various areas. For its part, it planned to sign a new CPF with the Agency for the period 2024–2028 and to provide support to Rays of Hope.

139. As the original proposer of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science and as the first country to be awarded the title of Capital of Women and Girls in Science, Malta remained a proud supporter of the advancement of girls in STEM subjects and in the nuclear field.

140. Given that diplomacy and multilateralism depended on the sovereign equality of all Member States, Malta called on all States that had yet to accept the amendment to Article VI of the Statute to consider doing so.

141. In closing, he reiterated his country's full support for the Director General and the Agency in fulfilling their mandates in such challenging times.

142. Mr MICHAL (Estonia) said that his country condemned in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine. It called on the Russian Federation to cease violating international law, including the UN Charter and the Agency's Statute, and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Estonia also condemned the continued voluntary involvement of Belarus in the aggression against Ukraine.

143. The Russian Federation's actions continued to pose a threat to nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and to jeopardize the security of all nations and the future of nuclear energy. The Russian Federation must immediately and fully withdraw its military equipment and personnel from Zaporizhzhya NPP and allow the Ukrainian authorities to resume their sovereign responsibilities without external pressure or interference. It was essential to acknowledge that Zaporizhzhya NPP rightfully belonged to Ukraine.

144. Estonia remained deeply concerned that the Russian Federation was deliberately compromising the Seven Pillars. The five principles to help ensure nuclear safety and security at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP were also important. Regular rotation of the Agency's experts and the provision of unrestricted and timely access to all locations at the plant must be ensured. The continued presence of the Agency at the plant and at other nuclear facilities in Ukraine was of crucial importance. Estonia commended the personnel of the Agency and Ukraine for their professional work under very difficult circumstances and thanked them for closely monitoring the situation and keeping the international community informed. The provision of assistance to Ukraine in ensuring nuclear safety and security and maintaining Agency safeguards on all nuclear materials and activities remained crucial.

145. Estonia encouraged the international community to hold the Russian Federation accountable and to support the Agency's comprehensive programme of technical assistance to Ukraine, at both national and international levels.

146. His Government was committed to addressing global climate change and achieving climate neutrality. All viable options for sustainable energy production needed to be explored. To that end, Estonia had established a nuclear energy working group tasked with assessing the potential for implementing SMRs in Estonia beyond 2030. To ensure a well informed and transparent decision-making process, Estonia was collaborating closely with the Agency, relevant stakeholders and international partners on the matter. An INIR mission was scheduled to take place in Estonia in October 2023, making it the first country in the world to host such a mission exclusively for SMRs. Following the mission, the working group would present its final report to the Government by the end of 2023 in order to facilitate a knowledge-driven decision on the initiation of a nuclear programme in Estonia.

147. Estonia already reaped the benefits of nuclear science and technology in sectors such as medicine, industry and education. The cooperation and support provided by the Agency through its expert missions and its TC programme were appreciated. Estonia's priorities in its collaboration with the Agency included ensuring the long-term management of radioactive waste by establishing a disposal facility in Estonia by 2040; advancing nuclear medicine and cancer treatment; and enhancing its knowledge of the safe use of nuclear power.

148. Expressing his country's support for ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics and Rays of Hope, he said that Estonia looked forward to the implementation of those initiatives for the benefit of Member States.

149. In closing, he conveyed his country's gratitude for the work carried out by the Director General and the Secretariat and urged all countries to provide their support to the Agency, including by meeting their financial obligations.

150. Ms BRUINS SLOT (Netherlands) said that a new nuclear world had been born at the moment when the first nuclear bomb had been detonated. For the first time, humanity had harnessed enough power to destroy itself. At that same moment, humanity had also gained its greatest responsibility yet — the responsibility to ensure its collective survival.

151. The international community had worked to fulfil that responsibility in a spirit of cooperation, even in times of geopolitical rivalry. It had created mechanisms to tame the forces that — if left unchecked — could bring disaster. The non-proliferation regime was the worthy result of that work, embodied most crucially in the NPT and the Agency, which used its technical expertise and its safeguards mechanism to tirelessly promote international peace and security in the nuclear domain.

152. While the Agency's efforts were extremely valuable, they could succeed only if all parties committed to pursuing shared goals and supporting the Agency in its work. Trust in the Agency and its methods was vital.

153. In that context, the Netherlands called on all countries, and Iran in particular, to cooperate fully with the Agency, especially at such a critical time when global interest in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology was rightly growing, given the crucial role that nuclear technology could play in resolving global challenges such as climate change, food shortages and energy insecurity and in creating a better, healthier and more secure future for all. All States should therefore take an interest in, and play a part in preparing for, new advances in nuclear energy such as the development of SMRs. The best way to prepare was to ensure the correct application of safeguards and safety at all nuclear facilities; to achieve that, the Agency needed the necessary tools and means.

154. Unfortunately, none of that was a given. The Russian Federation's war in Ukraine remained a cause for concern, especially the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP. The right to safe nuclear energy was an indispensable part of the NPT; nuclear safety and security must therefore be protected and respected at all times, as outlined in the Director General's Seven Pillars and five principles, which were simply too important to be ignored.

155. As in the period after the detonation of the first nuclear bomb, the international community had needed to work together to prevent nuclear conflict and disaster and ensure global stability through enduring effort, cooperation and mutual trust. Such an approach was the only way to create a future of hope and partnership and a world free from the shadow of nuclear destruction.

156. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czechia), congratulating the Director General on his reappointment, said that her country looked forward to continuing its close cooperation with him.

157. Once again, the General Conference was taking place against the backdrop of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against its neighbour, Ukraine. Threats to the non-proliferation architecture were growing in number. Seventy years after President Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' address, in which he had proposed the establishment of the Agency, strong support for the Agency's motto of 'Atoms for Peace and Development' was more important than ever.

158. Reaffirming her country's commitment to the Agency's mission, she conveyed its tremendous gratitude to the Director General and his staff for their dedicated work and acknowledged their expertise, professionalism and impartiality.

159. For the first time in the history of humanity, an NPP was being illegally occupied and weaponized, in a thoroughly deplorable and irresponsible act of nuclear intimidation by the Russian Federation. Such behaviour showed a blatant disregard for international law, the Board's resolutions and the very principles of the Agency's Statute. The Russian Federation must withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine and end the tragedy that it had inflicted.

160. The application of safeguards — one of the core missions of the Agency — remained an indispensable tool for ensuring global peace and security and should continue unimpaired. The non-proliferation framework needed to be strengthened, not weakened. Czechia therefore called for universalization of a CSA and additional protocol as the verification standard.

161. The escalation of Iran's nuclear programme to an alarming level beyond all credible civilian justification was a cause for grave concern. Czechia urged Iran to reverse its trajectory and immediately fulfil its legal obligations and commitments, cooperate fully with the Agency in earnest and in a sustained manner, and clarify all outstanding safeguards issues, including by reversing all detrimental steps, such as the withdrawal of designations from Agency inspectors.

162. NPPs were among the safest, cleanest and most reliable means of energy production. Combined with renewable sources, nuclear power presented a clear path to climate neutrality. Czechia was therefore a vocal advocate of nuclear energy and endorsed efforts to highlight its role in tackling climate change, including at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC.

163. The successful consensual outcome of the Joint Eighth and Ninth Review Meeting of the CNS — over which Czechia had presided — demonstrated clearly that the nuclear safety conventions remained relevant in the current context. Thanking all Contracting Parties for their commitment and constructive engagement, she reiterated the critical importance of services designed to help countries strengthen and enhance their regulatory framework for safety.

164. Certain countries, while criticizing the excessive politicization of technical issues, nonetheless continued to politicize issues themselves, as exemplified in the cases of the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (AUKUS) and the discharge of ALPS-treated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP. The Secretariat's role and responsibilities — including its mandate to engage directly with Member States — must be respected. She reiterated her country's satisfaction with and confidence in the Agency's continued impartial, independent and objective approach to such issues, which was helping to refute all possible concerns. AUKUS should be addressed within the existing international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The discharge of ALPS-treated water was taking place in a transparent manner and in line with international safety standards, under the independent and objective supervision of the Agency.

165. Conveying her country's appreciation for the Agency's role in making the world a better place, she highlighted the contradiction shown by States that spoke about the essential nature of the Agency's work while at the same time failing to pay their contributions in full and on time. The reported serious liquidity challenge facing the Agency was worrisome. Czechia therefore called on all Member States to honour their financial obligations to the Agency.

166. For its part, her country had been a staunch supporter of the Agency since its foundation, in both word and deed. In 2023, it had almost tripled the overall amount of its voluntary contributions. It also demonstrated its support through active engagement with the Agency. In that connection, she thanked all Member States for the support shown while her country had chaired the Board, and congratulated Ambassador Šrámek for his excellent work in exercising his duties with the utmost responsibility.

167. The Agency had been founded on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. Czechia would therefore strive to find a solution to the issue of sovereign equality that would guarantee all Member States the rights and benefits resulting from their membership.

168. Lastly, she reiterated her country's support for the Agency and its mandate, which were more important than ever. Facts should not be distorted and politics should be influenced by science, not vice versa.

169. Mr BOUKTHIR (Tunisia), commending the Director General's significant efforts to advance the Agency's objectives, enhance its performance and preserve the independence and proper conduct of the Secretariat, said that his reappointment with the unanimous agreement of Member States was an acknowledgement of his competent leadership.

170. Expressing support for the Agency's programmes and activities to accelerate and expand the contribution of atomic energy to global peace, health and prosperity, in accordance with Article II of its Statute, Tunisia voiced the hope that the Agency would maintain a balance between those core functions and the rest of its tasks.

171. Tunisia had striven in recent decades to remain one of the Agency's key partners, having upheld all its commitments and worked with other States to implement the Agency's projects and improve its operating mechanisms. It had therefore ratified all amendments to the Statute within a reasonable timeframe, including the Article XIV.A amendment, and would spare no effort to continue supporting the Agency in implementing its noble mandate. According to the Director General's report contained in document GC(67)/6, the fact that the Article XIV.A amendment — ratified by only 61 of the required 118 Member States — had yet to enter into force meant that the current process of adopting annual budgets drew considerable resources from both the Secretariat and Member States. Those States that had not yet done so should ratify the amendment within a reasonable timeframe.

172. Tunisia looked forward to enhancing the sustainable cooperation that it had built up with the Agency since its inception. His country had participated in numerous TC activities and projects involving nuclear science and technology, the strengthening of nuclear and radiation safety, and capacity-building in nuclear and radiological EPR at the national, regional and international levels, which had contributed to achieving tangible results in areas such as health, agriculture and industry. In that context, and taking into account the more than 80 proposed designs for SMRs, the Agency should intensify its work to define a legislative and regulatory framework for the new generation of reactors, issue or amend the relevant safety standards, and determine the applicability of international treaties and conventions on nuclear and radiation safety.

173. The ever-present risk of a nuclear security incident resulting from smuggling, sabotage or other crimes must be addressed to protect the public, people who worked with nuclear energy, the environment, property, and national and global security in general. In that respect, Tunisia thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in ensuring the security of the Francophonie Summit that it had hosted in November 2022 and looked forward to further cooperation with the Agency in that area.

174. As Tunisia valued the opportunities for cooperation provided by the Agency, it took great pains to meet its financial obligations to the Agency by paying its contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF and its national contributions to TC projects. Tunisia was committed to paying its TCF contribution for 2024 in full.

175. He concluded by commending the Secretariat's dedication and competence and wished the Conference success.

**Ms Mangklatanakul (Thailand), President, resumed the Chair.**



176. Ms ZIAKOVA (Slovakia) said that the Russian Federation's illegal and brutal aggression against Ukraine continued to seriously undermine nuclear safety and security at Ukrainian nuclear facilities and to increase the risk of a nuclear or radiological accident. Slovakia strongly condemned the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in gross violation of international law, the UN Charter and the principles of the Agency's Statute. She reaffirmed her country's full solidarity with Ukraine and its complete support and recognition for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

177. Slovakia commended the Agency for its unwavering commitment and tireless efforts in helping Ukraine maintain nuclear safety and security, in particular at its Zaporizhzhya NPP, where the illegal occupation by Russian forces was continuing and where the Director General's Seven Pillars had all been repeatedly compromised. Given that worrying situation, Slovakia underscored the importance of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya and reiterated its full support for the Director General's five principles to help ensure nuclear safety and security at the plant. The dedication, commitment and professionalism of the Agency's staff working at Ukrainian nuclear facilities was particularly commendable; their work was essential in providing impartial assessments to the public and international community regarding the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP. In that context, she announced that her country would provide a financial contribution to support the Agency's activities in Ukraine.

178. Slovakia remained strongly committed to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, which played an important role in advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Preserving the integrity of the NPT regime in the current security environment, which had deteriorated severely, was of the utmost importance. The Agency's safeguards had an essential function in that context, with CSAs together with an additional protocol constituting the current verification standard. Slovakia appreciated the Agency's impartial role in safeguards implementation and verification.

179. The continued escalation of Iran's nuclear programme, inconsistent with its JCPOA commitments, was worrisome. The decision by Iran to withdraw the official designation of several experienced Agency inspectors to monitor and verify its nuclear programme was particularly worrying, as that decision had severely impaired the Agency's ability to conduct its verification activities. Slovakia urged Iran to return to a path of cooperation with a view to fulfilling the commitments contained in the March 2023 Joint Statement and resolving all outstanding safeguards issues.

180. In the current geopolitical energy reality, nuclear power continued to demonstrate its pivotal and irreplaceable role for many countries, including Slovakia, as a necessary, safe, stable and carbon-free source of energy capable of complementing the various sources of renewable energy and addressing the world's energy problems. The indispensable nature of nuclear energy was becoming more and more significant as the impact of climate change became increasingly dramatic and the need to decarbonize became all the more urgent.

181. Nuclear power enjoyed an enduring position in the Slovak energy mix and would continue to be a strategic imperative and a key component of the country's energy policy for years to come. In 2023, Slovakia had reached yet another milestone in its nuclear power programme, having successfully connected Unit 3 of Mochovce NPP to the grid. The unit was presently operating at 100 per cent capacity, accounting for some 13 per cent of Slovakia's total electricity consumption and increasing the country's reliance on nuclear energy production to 67 per cent, which would help it become self-sufficient with regard to electricity. Thanks to nuclear power, in particular, Slovakia had one of the cleanest energy mixes in the world.

182. The subject of SMRs remained highly topical. Slovakia was engaging actively in bilateral cooperation with other Member States on SMR-related innovations and advancements and was continuing to track developments in that area through multiple forums, including the NHSI.

183. The development and use of nuclear and radiation technologies required vigorous adherence to safety and security standards. The Agency played a central role as a global reference point for enhancing the framework for nuclear safety, nuclear security and radiation protection, in particular through the development of safety standards and guidance on nuclear security. Slovakia remained strongly committed to the principles set out in those documents and strived constantly for improvement, including by regularly inviting missions from the Agency's peer review and advisory services. Slovakia had hosted a second IRRS mission in September 2022, followed by an ARTEMIS mission in February 2023, which had confirmed its commitment to ensuring a high level of safety. Furthermore, the ORPAS mission to Slovakia in summer 2023 had testified to the country's efforts to strengthen occupational radiation protection.

184. Slovakia was a staunch supporter of the Agency's mandate to advance the peaceful uses of the atom while tackling global challenges and providing lasting solutions in a wide range of areas, including the environment, human health, energy and climate change. It attached great relevance to the vital role that both nuclear power and non-power applications played in addressing socioeconomic and sustainable development objectives, including the fulfilment of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The Agency's TC programme was highly beneficial in that regard, especially in the area of capacity building and knowledge transfer. Joining calls for a demand-driven, efficient, non-discriminatory and needs-based programme, Slovakia invited all Member States to continue sharing the latest scientific developments and best practices in emerging technologies with a view to ensuring a high level of safety and security globally.

185. Slovakia praised the Director General's proactive approach and his flagship initiatives, which provided added value to the use of nuclear technologies for the benefit of humankind, especially in combating cancer, ensuring high levels of nuclear and radiation safety and security and advancing the benefits of innovative technologies, including SMRs, with a view to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Slovakia applauded the Agency for its important endeavours in that respect, which it would continue to follow with interest.

186. In closing, she reiterated her country's strong and continued support for the Agency in managing its statutory functions in an effective and efficient manner. Slovakia further welcomed the Agency's inclusive approach, its gender mainstreaming and its systematic efforts to achieve gender equality across all activities.

187. Mr SHANGULA (Namibia), congratulating the Director General on his reappointment, said that his country remained committed to supporting the Agency in carrying out its statutory mandate in the fields of non-proliferation, nuclear safety and nuclear security, as well as in nuclear applications and technical cooperation. In that connection, in 2023 Namibia had acceded to the revised AFRA.

188. As a key producer and supplier of uranium, Namibia attached great importance to the Agency's safeguards system, which was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It therefore called for the universalization of the NPT, the CSA and the additional protocol.

189. For its part, Namibia had accepted the modified SQP. In addition, in 2023 it had hosted a training session on bolstering the nuclear safeguards regime in Africa, in cooperation with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy and the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority.

190. Namibia commended Member States for the financial support provided to the TC programme, which remained the key vehicle through which vital developmental programmes were implemented. Namibia continued to meet its own financial obligations to the Agency in full and on time.

191. Non-communicable diseases, including cancer, placed a serious burden on national technical and financial capabilities. As primary health care was the first line of intervention in the fight against cancer, and as nuclear medicine and radiation therapy were crucial modalities in the continuum of cancer care, Namibia welcomed the allocation of resources to radiotherapy interventions in the forthcoming TC cycle and looked forward to further strengthening such interventions through Rays of Hope.

192. As the current supply of radiopharmaceuticals was unfortunately unable to meet the high global demand, small countries such as Namibia were left vulnerable in the competition for such vital commodities. Namibia therefore urged the Agency to introduce targeted interventions to promote equity and enable more countries to participate in the radiopharmaceutical supply chain, including by fostering local production of radiopharmaceuticals using research reactors or other technologies in order to ensure sustainability and self-reliance.

193. Food security, food safety, health and education were vital priorities in Namibia's national developmental agenda. Namibia recognized the potential of technical cooperation in the area of food security in particular, especially with regard to the development of high-yield, high-quality, drought-tolerant crop varieties.

194. The nuclear industry had catalysed and sustained the economic and industrial development of many developed countries. Developing countries aspired to carve out a similar path of sustainable and accelerated socioeconomic development by harnessing nuclear technologies, with a focus on self-reliance and self-sufficiency and buttressed by strong, mutually beneficial collaboration. To that end, Namibia was working to strengthen its legislative and institutional frameworks so as to be able to participate fully in the development of various nuclear applications, including the nuclear fuel value chain.

195. Attaching great importance to women's empowerment, Namibia had achieved notable progress in women's representation at all levels. It supported the Agency's efforts to further increase women's representation within the Agency, which stood at 42 per cent. It also encouraged the Agency to enhance efforts to ensure the equitable geographical representation of women at all levels.

196. Having recognized the catastrophic consequences of climate change, the global community was mobilizing every effort to achieve the net zero agenda. Namibia was relentlessly pursuing green hydrogen, not only for its economic development but also as the key to reducing national and global greenhouse emissions. Welcoming the theme of the Scientific Forum 2023, Namibia voiced its confidence that nuclear energy would find a solid and meaningful footing, alongside renewable energy sources, in the net zero agenda.

197. Mr CAFIERO (Argentina) said that his country had embraced the strategic benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Following more than seven decades of development, Argentina had fostered a sustained commitment to the principles of technological sovereignty and the defence of the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thereby establishing itself as a responsible and reliable producer and exporter of nuclear technology around the world.

198. Nuclear safety and security and the application of safeguards were of crucial importance and must be maintained for the benefit of development and the promotion of nuclear energy and technology. Argentina also took pains to nurture cooperation in order to facilitate safe and universal access to nuclear technologies, which were a tool for development and wellbeing. The climate crisis and the challenges

of mitigation and adaptation presented a new opportunity to demonstrate the value of nuclear power as a source of clean energy.

199. With 2024 marking 50 years since the start of operations at Argentina's — and Latin America's — first NPP, Atucha I, Argentina stood ready to begin work on extending the plant's life to enable it to provide clean, low-carbon energy for another 25 years. His Government had also recently decided to reactivate the Industrial Heavy Water Plant, which would help make Argentina a key player on the global market for heavy water. Argentina was, furthermore, a pioneer in the field of SMRs, having designed and built the CAREM-25 reactor with a fully domestic team.

200. Moreover, Argentina was contributing to technical cooperation and to nuclear science and technology through, among other things, the ongoing construction of the RA-10 multipurpose reactor, which would function as a global reference centre for health, science, industry and nuclear technology.

201. Far more than merely a bilateral safeguards institution, ABACC was a paradigm for integration and confidence-building between countries, which should serve as a regional and global example of how to manage cooperation in a highly sensitive and strategic area.

202. In 2022, Argentina had hosted a visit from the Director General, who had toured the country's main nuclear facilities. Together they had developed a proactive agenda focusing on TC, and instruments had been signed in relation to Rays of Hope and an Agency mission to Antarctica as part of NUTEC Plastics. He reiterated his country's firm commitment to the valuable technical and professional work of the Director General, especially during such difficult times, and welcomed his reappointment for a second term.

203. In the light of emerging challenges to the global architecture for nuclear security, disarmament and non-proliferation, Argentina called on all States to avoid any action that could endanger nuclear facilities or radioactive materials and reiterated its categorical opposition to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

204. Mr LIU Jing (China), speaking in response to the statement of Japan, recalled the origins and nature of the contaminated water from Fukushima Daiichi NPP, in particular the chaotic and ill-informed management on the ground following the earthquake of 11 March 2011 and the presence in that water of radionuclides from the molten core of the reactor that were extremely difficult to treat. He recalled also that the Fukushima nuclear accident was only the second so far to be classified at INES Level 7 and that the accident had seriously affected the development of nuclear industries and nuclear power worldwide.

205. While noting Japan's claims that ALPS-treated water met a standard allowing it to be discharged, he observed that the situation regarding the more than 60 other long-lived, hard-to-treat radionuclides also present in the contaminated water remained unclear. The long-term cumulative effects on the marine environment and human health caused by such a large amount of contaminated water being discharged into the ocean over a period of 30 years could not be accurately determined with the current level of scientific knowledge, and Japan had offered no scientific, credible report on that aspect. The Agency's assessment merely stated that the discharge was compatible with existing safety standards. There had been no scientific assessment of the overall impact on ocean sediments after more than 30 years of accumulation.

206. Current scientific capabilities and knowledge of the natural world were far from being as complete as people might think. Humans were not omnipotent, with complete control over nature. Rather, nature should be respected and revered. It was possible that, many years in the future, when the hazards caused by the ocean discharge had become apparent, the world would have a completely different understanding of the current conclusions. China opposed the discharge decision on that basis. Its opposition was

scientifically logical and responsible from the perspective of safeguarding human health and protecting the environment.

207. Lastly, the international community was reminded that disposal of the contaminated water was only one part of the decommissioning process for Fukushima Daiichi NPP. Close attention must be paid to the entire process, including the environmental and health dangers that it might entail.

208. Mr HIKIHARA (Japan), responding to the comments made by the representative of China, said that his country had never and would never release contaminated water. The discharge operation involved ALPS-treated water only, the safety of which had been confirmed on a daily basis through monitoring. It was unfortunate that a small number of Member States were continuing to use the phrase ‘contaminated water’ even in the face of scientific facts.

209. Whether an NPP had experienced an accident or not, the safety of water discharged from such facilities should be judged by the aggregate effect of all the nuclides in the water, regardless of the type or number of nuclides. All that mattered was that the nuclide level was below the single international regulatory standard that had been adopted. The Agency had reviewed the safety of the ALPS-treated water discharge on the basis of that standard and had reached the conclusion set out in its comprehensive report on the matter — namely, that the effect was negligible.

210. A careful assessment of the radiological environmental impact of the discharge had been conducted in line with international standards and guidelines, taking into account the effects of bioaccumulation and long-term accumulation. In its comprehensive report on that assessment, the Agency had concluded that the radiological impact on humans and the environment would be negligible. In fact, the radiological impact of the discharge of the ALPS-treated water into the sea in a single year would be less than 0.1 per cent of the radiation received on a single flight between Tokyo and New York. While wholeheartedly concurring with the need to respect nature, he did not understand the Chinese representative’s agnosticism regarding the work of the Agency and Member States. Japan was handling the process scientifically and objectively and would continue to do so over the forthcoming decades, with the involvement of the Agency.

211. Mr LIU Jing (China) thanked the Japanese delegation for acknowledging the shared human values of respect and reverence for nature. As someone who also worked in the nuclear industry, he personally considered that a quantitative or scientific assessment of the effects of the total amount of radioactivity to be discharged into the ocean was extremely difficult to make. If the Japanese delegation desired documentary evidence of that difficulty, he would be able to provide it.

212. Taking fossil fuel power plants as an example, he said that it was common knowledge that there were stringent emissions standards for such plants in many countries, including for emissions of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides, and such plants were allowed to operate only if the emission standards were met. Nonetheless, the international community had sought to limit total carbon dioxide emissions, leading China to take actions to move beyond peak carbon dioxide emissions and achieve carbon neutrality. In other words, it was inappropriate to consider the issue solely in terms of meeting emissions standards; the total amount of radioactive material discharged must also be considered, the impact of which on ocean ecology was currently difficult to assess.

213. It was well known that radionuclides and radioactivity were harmful to human beings and the environment, and it was sometimes difficult to quantify the overall harm scientifically. There was consensus in the nuclear industry that, as an ethical guideline, the utmost must be done to avoid emitting radionuclides into the environment or to emit them to the minimum extent. That principle had allowed the industry to regain some level of approval from governments and the public, even following two or three major nuclear accidents.

214. Mr HIKIHARA (Japan) said that, on the topic of radionuclides, some Chinese nuclear plants released five to ten times more tritium each year than was planned to be released during the discharge from Fukushima Daiichi NPP.

**The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.**