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President: Mr OBRADOVIĆ (Serbia)

Later: Mr MOHD IBRAHIM (Malaysia)

Later: Ms KITSELL (United Kingdom)

Later: Mr HAM Sang Wook (Republic of Korea)

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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	Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEANTOM	ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
EU	European Union
FORO	Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
G-20	Group of Twenty
ICONS	International Conference on Nuclear Security
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

INSServ	International Nuclear Security Advisory Service
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
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	megawatt
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
RADON	United Ecological, Technological and Scientific Research Centre for the Decontamination of Radioactive Waste and Environmental Protection
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Site and External Events Design
SIT	sterile insect technique
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
TC	technical cooperation

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2023 (continued) (GC(68)/2)

1. Mr MUSHI (United Republic of Tanzania), commending the Secretariat for its meticulous organization of the General Conference, said that his country was striving to advance the deployment of nuclear science and technology, given their significant potential in driving sustainable development and enhancing quality of life both locally and globally. It had bolstered its radiotherapy services, thereby increasing access to life-saving cancer treatment, and it was deploying nuclear breeding technology to produce disease-resistant, salt-tolerant rice varieties that had over 60% higher yields than traditional varieties.

2. Tanzania had also greatly improved its nuclear technology services and capabilities through the acquisition of advanced equipment, for which it was thankful to the Agency. Furthermore, it had greatly invested in the development of skilled personnel in the area of nuclear science and technology with a view to boosting the country's scientific and technological advancement; in that connection, it had introduced a scholarship in honour of the current President of Tanzania that had been specifically designed to support citizens in pursuing postgraduate studies at prestigious institutions abroad.

3. In order to ensure the safety and security of unused nuclear and radioactive materials, Tanzania was dedicating resources to maintain and improve the national radioactive waste management facility at the Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission. In addition, with its abundant uranium deposits, Tanzania was committed to advancing the safe use of diverse nuclear energy sources so as to achieve a low-carbon, sustainable energy future. At the US–Africa Nuclear Energy Summit held in Nairobi in August 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister of Tanzania had reaffirmed the country's dedication to creating a supportive environment for nuclear electricity generation.

4. Tanzania remained committed to regional and global efforts to advance the peaceful use of nuclear technologies across various sectors, such as Atoms4Food, Rays of Hope and African regional cooperation programmes. His country further reaffirmed its unwavering support for the Agency's mission and its commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology for the benefit of humanity. It looked forward to continued collaboration with the Agency and Member States as they worked together to promote sustainable development, security and prosperity for all.

5. Mr SANTANA NÚÑEZ (Cuba) said that, instead of tackling the worsening poverty and hunger induced by climate change, powerful countries and corporations were channelling their resources into less noble pursuits. Incalculable resources were being wasted on the development and modernization of nuclear weapons, while development aid commitments were being abandoned. For its part, his country remained committed to multilateralism and to transparent, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament, for which purpose the universalization of the TPNW was crucial.

6. In the current bleak and complex global landscape, it was essential to bolster the promotion of science and cooperation as fundamental drivers of socioeconomic progress, especially in developing countries. Cuba therefore appreciated the Agency's work towards achieving the SDGs, its initiatives to address global problems such as hunger and climate change, in particular Atoms4Food, and its promotion of women in the nuclear field — including Cuban professionals — through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme.

7. Cuba praised the work of the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean, from whose cooperation it had benefited, and would reaffirm its demonstrably strong commitment to national and regional strategic projects by signing a new CPF later in the week. In that connection, Cuba highlighted the fundamental role played by ARCAL — which was celebrating its 40th anniversary — in supporting regional cooperation in 2024.
8. The designation of the Cienfuegos Environmental Studies Centre as a Collaborating Centre for the application of nuclear and isotopic techniques in studies to support the integrated management of coastal zones and climate change had reinforced his country's mission to advance the peaceful use of nuclear energy in line with the SDGs.
9. Cuba set great store by nuclear and radiation safety, nuclear security and nuclear safeguards and supported their application during the use of nuclear techniques, as demonstrated by the work of its national regulatory authority, the promulgation of its updated decree-law on the use of nuclear energy and other sources of ionizing radiation, and its successful delivery of an edition of the International School on Nuclear Security in 2024. It had submitted its national report to the Eighth Joint Convention Review Meeting and had formally requested an IRRS mission to be conducted in 2026, reflecting its readiness to continue improving nuclear safety.
10. His country supported the activities of FORO, which continued to foster stronger nuclear and radiation safety and security in the Ibero-American region and internationally. His country also welcomed the initiative to draft a new code of conduct to strengthen the safe and secure transport of radioactive material — a vital link in the development of nuclear applications.
11. Cuba continued to uphold its nuclear safeguards commitments with full transparency. New nuclear safeguards regulations had been adopted to further bolster its national regime for the control of nuclear material.
12. Rejecting all unilateral coercive measures that impinged on the development and sovereign rights of States, Cuba denounced the intensification of the US embargo imposed on the country more than 60 years previously and its extraterritorial application. That policy violated international law, threatened Cuba's development and the well-being of its citizens and hindered the full exercise of its right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
13. Cuba thanked the Agency for its contribution to national capacity building through technical cooperation and urged it to continue seeking new approaches to meet the growing needs of its Member States. True to its tradition of solidarity, Cuba put at the disposal of all countries, especially developing countries, its human resources and all the capacities that it had acquired over years of successful cooperation with the Agency in the uses of nuclear technology for peace and sustainable development.
14. Ms GARIN (Philippines) said that her country recognized the transformative power of atomic energy for sustainable development and commended the Agency for its continued delivery of assistance in that regard. The Philippines was actively working towards the establishment of an independent nuclear regulatory authority, underpinned by comprehensive legislation that encompassed the various principles and guidelines governing nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. It was also seeking to ratify the various nuclear safety-related conventions as a matter of priority.
15. The past year had been a landmark year for the Philippines, with the release of its nuclear energy road map, based on the Milestones approach. Her country aimed to produce 1200 MW of nuclear power from commercially operational NPPs by 2032, gradually increasing to 4800 MW by 2050. The work was being steered by the country's Nuclear Energy Programme Inter-Agency Committee, led by the Department of Energy, which brought a whole-of-government approach to the integration of

nuclear power. In addition, in November 2024, the Philippines was set to host the International Nuclear Supply Chain Forum, which would bring together government and private sector stakeholders to discuss partnership opportunities in nuclear energy.

16. The Philippines was preparing for an INIR follow-up mission in December 2024, which would assess the progress made following the initial INIR mission in 2018. Through its six sub-committees, the Nuclear Energy Programme Inter-Agency Committee was implementing all the Agency's recommendations simultaneously.

17. The Philippines reaffirmed its strong support for promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy while ensuring nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be considered equal in importance to disarmament and non-proliferation. It was in that vein that her country recognized the inextricable link between the Agency's work and the various pillars of the NPT.

18. At the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference, the Philippines, along with 28 like-minded States Parties, had submitted a landmark working paper on upscaling the non-power applications of nuclear energy, the main message of which was that, as non-power applications helped States achieve the SDGs, they should, just like power applications, receive adequate and proportional recognition, and promotion and support from governments and industry. Her country was pleased to note that 'non-power', a term traditionally used only in engagements at the Agency, was being used more prominently in the NPT review cycle.

19. The importance of non-power applications was reflected in the tangible benefits provided by the projects that the Agency had supported in the areas of food and agriculture, human health and nutrition, water resources management, biotechnology, nanotechnology, the environment, industry, knowledge management, and education and training.

20. For its part, the Government, in cooperation with industry partners, was investing heavily in upscaling nuclear applications. The Philippines was working to commercialize a carrageenan-based plant growth supplement that could lead to a 19% increase in farmers' incomes. In addition, with the Government's assistance, an industry partner had been able to establish a commercial electron beam facility for food and pharmaceutical products — the first of its kind in the country.

21. In the field of health, the Philippines was establishing a public-private nuclear medicine research and innovation centre and programme, with the aim of making cancer diagnosis more accessible and affordable for its citizens. With regard to the environment, the Philippines was serving as a pilot country under NUTEC Plastics. Furthermore, one of the country's private sector partners was manufacturing furniture made from recycled plastics obtained using nuclear techniques; the Philippines had begun working with various stakeholders to scale up the project in the hopes that it would engage multiple sectors of society.

22. Her country had successfully integrated nuclear science into several secondary and tertiary educational programmes. Moreover, the first International Nuclear Science Olympiad for secondary students had been successfully conducted in the Philippines in August 2024.

23. The Philippines looked forward to all Agency initiatives that promoted the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology, in particular the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in Vienna in November 2024. The Philippines expressed its support for the Co-Chairs and hoped that the Conference would help mainstream both the power and non-power applications of atomic energy.

24. Highlighting the leading role played by women in the development of its nuclear programme and its nuclear applications projects, the Philippines emphasized that gender equality was at the forefront of its use of atomic energy to achieve sustainable development.

25. Mr MATTOS COSTA (Uruguay) said that his country had always been recognized as a pacifist State and a defender of international law — the principles of which had unequivocally guided its activities and foreign policy. In that context, Uruguay reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to a universal, complete and verifiable disarmament and non-proliferation regime, which could be achieved only through multilateralism based on the principles of good faith and mutual respect.

26. The Agency enjoyed international respect and recognition owing to its professionalism, credibility and independence in the discharge of its mandate. Uruguay supported the work of the Agency and had full confidence in its safeguards system, which should be expanded to cover all Member States. Having ratified its own additional protocol, Uruguay was committed to preventing the diversion of nuclear material for non-peaceful uses and its appropriation by terrorist groups. It was proud to be part of the world's first NWFZ and encouraged the establishment of more such zones as an effective way to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation.

27. Uruguay reaffirmed its support for the universalization of the TPNW, which was an important instrument in the non-proliferation and disarmament regime which complemented, and was consistent with, the NPT and the CTBT. His country supported such verification and disarmament mechanisms and called once again on the international community to respect and support the safeguards regime as a shared tool for effectively tackling the dangers of proliferation.

28. Uruguay firmly defended the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development and well-being. As the Agency's technical cooperation was crucial to support that right, shape peaceful nuclear technology in service of progress and well-being and achieve the SDGs, his country highly valued the work of the Department of Technical Cooperation, with which it remained in regular contact, and was grateful for the assistance that it had received from the Agency in a variety of important areas, such as the development of regulatory infrastructure and the provision of human resources training and education in nuclear security, inspection, radioactive waste management, medical applications and the use of new equipment and enabling technologies. It thanked the Member States that had made voluntary contributions to make that possible. Uruguay also highlighted the Agency's strong gender policy in all areas.

29. Uruguay welcomed ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, Rays of Hope and Atoms4Food, all of which promoted partnership, resource mobilization and awareness of global challenges. His country attached particular importance to regional projects, including under ARCAL, in which it participated actively. The activities of FORO also merited special mention, and Uruguay encouraged it to continue collaborating with the Agency.

30. In view of the extensive needs of Latin America and the Caribbean, Uruguay reiterated that the allocated funds were insufficient and that the TCF should not have to rely on voluntary contributions for its resources, which must be sufficient, assured and predictable.

31. Expressing its appreciation for the Agency's work in nuclear and radiation safety and nuclear security, his country reaffirmed its commitment to the Nuclear Security Plan and the Amendment to the CPPNM. It also recognized the fundamental role of States and their national policies in that sphere and the need for adequate contingency plans to ensure the protection and security of nuclear material and facilities. For its part, Uruguay had an independent, professional and responsible regulatory authority that maintained regular contact with its counterparts in the Agency.

32. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, a Contracting Party to the Tlatelolco Treaty and a State party to the NPT, the TPNW and the CTBT, Uruguay was committed at the highest level to strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It reaffirmed its full commitment to the Agency and to safeguards implementation and urged all Member States to comply fully with their arms control,

disarmament and non-proliferation obligations and commitments so as to contribute positively to international peace and security.

33. Mr ABDILLEH (Djibouti) said that his country appreciated the tireless efforts and invaluable contribution of the Director General and Agency staff to preserving peace and nuclear security at a time of serious tension.

34. Developing countries faced many pressing challenges, in particular climate change, food insecurity and weak health systems. As a State wholly committed to the NPT and the principles of non-proliferation, Djibouti firmly believed that nuclear science and technology — which must be used exclusively for peace, health and prosperity — were crucial to improve people's lives and accelerate sustainable development in key sectors such as health, agriculture and natural resource management.

35. In 2023, Djibouti had decided to join Rays of Hope to help effectively combat cancer, which had become a major public health challenge. Under the initiative, and with the collaboration of the Islamic Development Bank, his country planned to establish its first radiotherapy centre. The first phases of the project were firmly under way. In addition, Djibouti had received an imPACT mission in October 2023. Member States and international partners were urged to step up their support for Rays of Hope, which was essential for developing radiotherapy capacity in the Horn of Africa.

36. With over 20% of its population facing hunger, food insecurity remained a key priority for Djibouti. The use of nuclear technologies for food preservation could help reduce post-harvest losses, thereby both solving an immediate need and providing a long-term strategy for achieving sustainable food security.

37. Given the importance of strengthening its national capacity in nuclear safety and security, his country had established a nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological safety and security authority and had recently adopted national regulations on the use of nuclear technologies so as to protect workers, patients and the environment against the risks of ionizing radiation. Ongoing training and access to state-of-the-art technologies were necessary to ensure the safe and effective implementation of those regulations.

38. The Agency's commendable ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastic initiatives illustrated perfectly its role in deploying nuclear science to address global challenges and promote a safe and sustainable future for all. Djibouti encouraged the Agency to continue playing a leading role in disseminating nuclear technologies to developing countries through capacity building and training programmes. AFRA, for example, had provided his country with valuable capacity-building support in the area of oncology.

39. In a global context charged with geopolitical tension, Djibouti reaffirmed its support for a world order based on international law and on multilateral cooperation in service of peace and security. It could not ignore the tragedy unfolding in Gaza, however; it therefore vigorously condemned the genocide being perpetrated by the State of Israel, in outright defiance of international law, including international humanitarian law. Djibouti would continue to support the General Conference's resolutions on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East and encouraged all Member States to accede to the NPT.

40. In closing, he reaffirmed Djibouti's commitment to working with the Agency and Member States to attain the SDGs, improve global security and ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy to improve quality of life and promote a safer and more equitable world.

41. Mr LE Xuan Dinh (Viet Nam) said that his country appreciated the tremendous efforts and remarkable achievements of the Agency in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and ensuring global safety and security. Viet Nam reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the peaceful application of

nuclear technology to address global challenges and support sustainable development, especially by working with the Agency to implement such initiatives as ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, Atoms4Food and Rays of Hope.

42. Viet Nam was grateful to the Agency for the cooperation and support provided through national TC projects, which had helped the country implement its new research reactor project and make important achievements in the application of nuclear energy in areas such as health care, agriculture, industry, research, environmental protection, water resources management, climate change response and radiation and nuclear safety infrastructure. Viet Nam was also actively participating in the design of new regional and interregional projects.

43. Through the TC programme, Viet Nam had made efforts to implement the Practical Arrangements for triangular cooperation with Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Significant results had been achieved under those Arrangements in 2024.

44. In the field of nuclear security, Viet Nam continued to benefit from Agency support for strengthening its capabilities, including through the installation of radiation portal monitoring systems at international airports and through the INSServ mission carried out in 2023. The review of its INSSP had helped identify specific needs and future activities to support the detection, prevention and response to unauthorized acts involving materials outside of regulatory control.

45. Throughout 2024, Viet Nam had made concerted efforts to facilitate the conduct of in-field safeguards activities by Agency inspectors and to perform domestic safeguards activities. It had consistently responded to all Agency verification requests in line with its CSA and additional protocol, thereby affirming its commitment to the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

46. Viet Nam's nuclear research reactor, located in Da Lat, continued to operate in accordance with the Agency's safety standards and to play a crucial role in scientific research, training and the production of essential radiopharmaceuticals to meet national and regional needs. A new project was currently being implemented to establish a research centre for nuclear science and technology featuring a 10 MW research reactor. The project was in the site survey and evaluation phase, and a feasibility study report was being developed. Viet Nam thanked the Agency for its support of the project, in particular through TC projects to support the country's reactor safety development programme, and looked forward to continuing collaboration with the Agency, including in the form of consultations and human resource development, in order to ensure the success of the project.

47. Viet Nam expressed appreciation to all Agency staff for their dedication and efficiency and thanked the Agency for its valuable cooperation and assistance. The Agency could count on the full support of his Government in fulfilling its mandate to promote the peaceful application of nuclear technology for sustainable development.

48. Ms DA ROCHA (Brazil) said that, as a supporter of the Agency since its inception almost 70 years previously, her country had actively participated in efforts to advance the core objectives enshrined in the Agency's Statute. Brazil's commitment to the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes was a fundamental principle of its foreign policy, enshrined in the country's Constitution and reflected in its accession to various international legal agreements.

49. Brazil praised the Agency's efforts to facilitate access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as called for by developing countries in particular. It noted with satisfaction the series of flagship initiatives launched by the Director General — notably Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics and Atoms4Food, which had made an important contribution to the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda — and underscored the Agency's role in promoting peaceful nuclear applications in such areas as energy and climate change, health, food and agriculture, water management and industrial

applications. Brazil also acknowledged the Director General's vision and commitment in promoting gender equality and pursuing equitable geographical distribution in the Agency's recruitment practices and programmatic areas.

50. The use of nuclear energy went hand in hand with important obligations regarding nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. Even in the current challenging conditions, the Agency had consistently carried out its mission in those areas, notably through the ongoing IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya. That groundbreaking assistance in the context of an armed conflict should serve as inspiration for other situations where Agency support was needed; for example, the Agency could provide technical assistance and equipment to help address the impact of the conflict in Gaza on the civilian population.

51. No less important was the Agency's role in the implementation of NPT safeguards, which ensured that the atom was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Naval nuclear propulsion was a new area of verification in which the Agency was being called upon to lend its expertise. Since 2022, Brazil had been engaging in negotiations on the special procedures foreseen in Article 13 of the Quadripartite Agreement for the use of nuclear material in its own naval nuclear propulsion project. Her country was confident that, at the end of the negotiations, the Agency would be able to provide credible assurances of the non-diversion of nuclear material while allowing Brazil to exercise its right to use naval nuclear propulsion and protect sensitive information. The engagement of ABACC in the process further demonstrated Brazil's long-standing commitment to transparency and confidence building in the nuclear field.

52. During his visit to Brazil in June 2024, the Director General had been able to witness the breadth of the country's nuclear programme and interact with high-level authorities on the topic of cooperation with the Agency. Two new initiatives had been included in that portfolio, namely a memorandum of understanding on plastic pollution control in Antarctica and an agreement on the designation of the Brazilian Nuclear and Energy Research Institute as a Collaborating Centre for computer security, radiation detection and physical protection — the first of its kind in the region. The Agency's contribution to Brazil's G-20 presidency had also been discussed, and the Director General was expected to attend the G-20 Energy Transitions Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Brazil in October 2024.

53. Brazil was actively engaged in several flagship Agency initiatives, including Atoms4Food, which was fully aligned with its foreign policy objective of reducing food insecurity and hunger across the globe. Under Brazil's G-20 presidency, the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty would be launched at the G-20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November 2024.

54. Noting the progress made under Rays of Hope, she said that the Brazilian Multipurpose Reactor would ensure Brazil's self-sufficiency in the production of radioisotopes for human health — in particular cancer diagnosis and treatment — and for industry and agriculture.

55. Brazil not only benefited from the Agency's cooperation and expertise, but it also significantly contributed to Agency programmes that had an impact on the region and beyond, including those under ARCAL, which was celebrating 40 years of successful cooperation with the Agency. Brazil was looking forward to discussing its experiences and possible new areas of cooperation at the upcoming Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme.

56. Brazil was proud of its contribution, both past and present, to international endeavours to bring about a safe, secure, prosperous and peaceful world. The use of nuclear technology was key to solving the most pressing development challenges, and States had a shared responsibility to deliver such technology to those who needed it most.

57. Mr LÜCHINGER (Switzerland) said that Liechtenstein associated itself with his statement.

58. His country commended the Director General for his leadership and thanked him and the entire Agency for their high-quality work. Switzerland had full confidence in the independent, impartial and professional manner in which the Agency carried out its mandate.

59. The Agency played a vital role in enabling States to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while curbing and preventing nuclear proliferation. However, the severe pressure on the global non-proliferation architecture and the nuclear safety and security regime could not be ignored.

60. Iran's continued suspension of the provisional application of its additional protocol, its non-implementation of other transparency measures related to the JCPOA, and the existence of outstanding safeguards questions had had a serious impact on the Agency's ability to verify that Iran's activities were exclusively peaceful. Switzerland urged Iran to fully implement the mutually agreed steps contained in the March 2023 joint statement and to act upon the relevant Board of Governors resolutions. Moreover, it specifically called on Iran to implement all legally binding obligations, most notably the modified Code 3.1 of the General Part of the Subsidiary Arrangements to its safeguards agreement. Those subsidiary arrangements could not be modified or suspended unilaterally. Switzerland deplored the fact that, since 2021, no agreement had been reached on restoring the non-proliferation measures provided for in the JCPOA, despite the attempts to do so. The preservation of those measures and their benefits remained crucial for safeguarding the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

61. The DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes posed a threat to regional and international peace and security. Given the deeply troubling nature of the Director General's recent reports on the DPRK's nuclear programme, Switzerland urged the DPRK to take practical steps towards abandoning its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to cease all related activities. Moreover, the DPRK must return to the NPT and Agency safeguards as soon as possible. In addition, Switzerland called on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency in connection with the unresolved issues related to the Dair Alzour site and other locations.

62. Switzerland supported efforts to further optimize the safeguards system in order to make the most efficient and effective use of the limited resources available to the Agency. Through its Member State Support Programme, Switzerland actively contributed to various safeguards development projects.

63. It was not possible to address the safety and security aspects of nuclear technology without mentioning the deeply worrying situation at certain nuclear facilities as a result of the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine. Any attack on a nuclear installation was irresponsible and unacceptable. Switzerland had repeatedly called on the parties to the conflict to refrain from conducting hostilities in the vicinity of NPPs or other nuclear facilities. All parties must comply with international humanitarian law, in particular with the Geneva Conventions and their Protocol I.

64. Switzerland welcomed the continued commitment of the Agency and the Director General to protecting nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. It supported the Agency in its crucial work, both at the political level and by providing financial and in-kind contributions, and strongly backed the Five Principles — which both the Russian Federation and Ukraine must respect in full — and the Seven Pillars. The Agency experts at Zaporizhzhya NPP and the staff members of the Ukrainian regulatory authority must always be granted timely access to all areas of the plant.

65. Nuclear security was indispensable both in preventing nuclear proliferation and in ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Switzerland would therefore continue to engage actively to strengthen global nuclear security. It fully supported the statement issued by the Co-Presidents of ICONS 2024.

66. Switzerland encouraged all Member States to make use of the Agency's safety standards and security guidance and to regularly host advisory services and peer review missions. Switzerland regularly hosted such missions, including an IPPAS follow-up mission in 2023, and was committed to further improving its nuclear security regime on the basis of the mission's findings.

67. Switzerland had ratified — and remained fully committed to — all conventions concluded under the auspices of the Agency; it encouraged Member States to accede to those conventions and to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Underlining the key role played by the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, he said that his country was honoured to be serving as Chair of the Commission on Safety Standards and appreciated Member States' cooperation in that regard.

68. Through its Collaborating Centres and other means, Switzerland had long been an active supporter of the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications, which were indispensable to the achievement of the SDGs. For example, the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne was conducting advanced reactor experiments in the field of nuclear energy and developing high-fidelity multiphysics nuclear simulation techniques, and the Spiez Laboratory was involved in the Agency's interlaboratory comparison study on the discharge of ALPS-treated water at Fukushima Daiichi NPP. Switzerland had also signed Practical Arrangements to expand cooperation between the Agency and the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology.

69. Mr ZANANAVIČIUS (Lithuania) said that the year 2024 had been marked by the significant efforts of the Agency and its Member States to shape the future of nuclear security and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of nuclear safety-related instruments, such as the CNS and the Joint Convention. Lithuania was looking forward to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in Vienna later in the year.

70. It was regrettable that, for the third year in a row, the Agency had been obliged to concentrate its activities and financial resources on providing support and assistance to the suffering people of Ukraine. That would not have been necessary if the Russian Federation had not launched its unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. It was hard to comprehend that the Russian Federation was continuing to threaten the world with a possible nuclear disaster by transforming the seized Zaporizhzhya NPP into a military base. Moreover, in continuing to destroy the entire energy infrastructure of Ukraine, the Russian Federation posed a threat to the safety and security of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

71. The only sustainable solution to that precarious situation was that set out in the Ukrainian proposal presented at the Summit on Peace in Ukraine in June 2024. The Russian Federation must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its military and other personnel, including Rosatom personnel, from Zaporizhzhya NPP and from the entire territory of Ukraine and must fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders.

72. Lithuania continued to have concerns about the Russian-built Belarusian NPP located close to Vilnius. Lithuania maintained its strong position that the Belarusian NPP was unsafe and should not be in operation, given the untransparent and improper site selection process — including the selective approach to the SEED mission modules — the way in which the NPP had been constructed, the recurrent equipment failures and unplanned shutdowns, and Belarus's attitude to openness and transparency towards its own citizens and the citizens of neighbouring countries. It was crucial that the plant's safety be prioritized to protect the region from any potential hazards.

73. The unchecked advances in the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic weapons programmes were unacceptable. The recent statements by the leader of the DPRK on his plans to exponentially increase the number of nuclear weapons in his country's possession threatened the security and stability of the

region and beyond. Lithuania therefore joined the international community in calling on the DPRK to refrain from actions that jeopardized international peace and security and to take steps towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

74. The Agency's latest reports showed that Iran was expanding its nuclear programme in ways that had no credible civilian justification and was failing to provide the Agency with the necessary cooperation to prove otherwise. Lithuania strongly urged Iran to reverse its nuclear trajectory and to take steps to build international confidence and meet the expectations outlined by the Director General and the Board of Governors.

75. The Lithuanian Parliament had recently adopted a new national energy independence strategy, which included the aim of analysing the possibility of using advanced SMR technologies in Lithuania. The adoption of that strategy, along with the goal of achieving rapid growth in renewable energy production, marked a turning point in the development of the country's energy sector.

76. Since 2023, the operators of Ignalina NPP, in collaboration with two major global companies, had been working on design options for the high-power channel-type reactor dismantling technology as required for decommissioning the plant. The first-of-its-kind design solutions were expected by the end of 2027.

77. Lithuania was fully committed to ensuring the safe and efficient management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste and was investing in the development of the necessary infrastructure. The decommissioning of the RADON-type radioactive waste storage facility in Maišiagala was in its final stages. All radioactive waste from the storage facility had already been transferred to the modern storage facilities at Ignalina NPP. Lithuania was consistently working to identify a suitable site for a deep geological repository.

78. Protecting the public against radiation exposure was a continuous process that required the regular improvement of various infrastructure elements, especially in view of the current geopolitical situation and related challenges. In implementation of the Agency's safety standards on radiation protection in planned, emergency and existing exposure situations, Lithuania was working to reduce the radiation dose to which the public was exposed and to prepare for a radiological or nuclear accident. Regional and national projects conducted under the auspices of the Agency provided important inputs for making progress in those areas.

79. In closing, Lithuania reaffirmed its support for the Agency's work, which played a crucial role in ensuring radiation protection and nuclear safety, security and safeguards worldwide.

Mr Mohd Ibrahim (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

80. Ms KUREVSKA (Latvia) said that her country aligned itself with the official statement of the European Union.

81. Noting that severe challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation architecture remained, her country condemned in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unjustified full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. The Russian Federation's actions had significantly escalated risks to nuclear safety and security, notably through its illegal seizure and militarization of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP. The Agency's missions to Ukrainian nuclear facilities, and in particular the permanent presence of Agency experts at Zaporizhzhya NPP, were critical to ensuring the safe and secure operation of those facilities. Latvia commended the Agency's efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security in Ukraine through observance of the Seven Pillars and the Five Principles.

82. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and its irresponsible behaviour in that regard not only increased the risks to global nuclear safety and security but also placed additional

strain on the Agency and other national and international institutions that tracked radiation levels. Latvia was grateful to the Agency for providing fact-based, independent information about the nuclear safety situation in Ukraine, thus reducing misinformation and improving public understanding and confidence.

83. Iran's deeply worrying departure from its JCPOA commitments could have irreversible proliferation implications for the region and beyond. Latvia urged Iran to fully implement its NPT safeguards agreement and cooperate with the Agency in a timely and transparent manner.

84. Her country condemned the DPRK's continued provocations — its nuclear programme and arsenal were in blatant violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. Latvia called on the DPRK to pursue complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization and comply fully with the NPT and Agency safeguards.

85. While it supported the safe and sustainable use of nuclear technology, Latvia believed that non-proliferation commitments must be upheld in order to fully realize the benefits of such technology. It highly valued the Agency's vital role in promoting the safe, secure and sustainable use of nuclear technology around the world and emphasized the importance of efforts to enhance global nuclear safety, prevent nuclear terrorism and foster responsible innovations in energy, medicine and other fields. Although demand for nuclear applications was growing, technological development must be accompanied by stringent safety and security standards.

86. As one of the countries considering nuclear energy as a potential option for future electricity production, Latvia was carefully evaluating the associated risks, costs and benefits before making a final decision and was cognizant of the fact that responsibility for ensuring the highest standards of nuclear safety and security rested with each individual State.

87. An IRRS follow-up mission would be conducted in Latvia in October 2024 to assess national progress in strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of regulatory infrastructure. Her country would also host a number of regional events on behalf of the Agency, including a regional training course on advanced dosimetry and the use of quality control tools in diagnostic radiology.

88. Latvia had implemented three national TC projects during the 2024–2025 cycle. In the next cycle, Latvia planned to enhance knowledge, skills and technical capacity in cancer diagnosis and stereotactic radiotherapy treatment and in paediatric diagnostics in radiology and would continue to strengthen radiation safety culture in medical contexts and further improve the knowledge of its regulatory team. Her country was grateful to the Agency for the opportunity provided to its national institutions to strengthen their competence in various areas of radiation protection, nuclear safety and nuclear security. It also greatly appreciated the invaluable guidance on adjusting its regulatory framework provided by the Department of Technical Cooperation.

89. Latvia highly valued the Agency's work across the entire spectrum of its mandate and its indispensable role in ensuring nuclear safety, security and safeguards and radiation protection worldwide.

90. Mr OBRADOVIĆ (Serbia), expressing his country's satisfaction with the manner and scope of its cooperation with the Agency, which was important for enhancing radiation and nuclear safety and security, said that Serbia remained fully committed to the Agency's fundamental principles and goals of ensuring the safe and secure use of nuclear energy, especially considering the country's strong and traditional orientation towards the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of each person and of society as a whole.

91. Serbia continued to develop its legislative and regulatory framework for radiation and nuclear safety and security in line with international standards and the EU acquis. It would continue to support

the Secretariat's efforts to enhance international standards and relevant international legal documents in that area.

92. Serbia remained unreservedly dedicated to global peace, security and development, which aligned with the Agency's programmes and activities aimed at strengthening the effective verification of nuclear safeguards in line with the NPT and ensuring compliance with the non-proliferation regime. In addition, Serbia attached priority to combating nuclear terrorism and strongly supported the efforts of the international community to deter illegal trafficking in nuclear material and other radiation sources, in particular through their proper physical protection and the retrieval of orphan sources under regulatory control.

93. His country's prime concerns were public health, environmental protection and the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology for global peace and prosperity and the welfare of future generations. His country would continue to fulfil its obligations under the relevant international conventions and apply the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources as a non-legally binding instrument, along with the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, given their importance in enhancing the safety and security of radiation sources.

94. Serbia fully supported the Annual Report for 2023 and the Programme and Budget for 2025 and had continued to enhance its close cooperation with the Agency over the past year. The professional and financial support that the Agency provided to his country was key to the establishment and development of the safe and secure use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the application of proper radiation protection measures and the reinforcement of national regulatory infrastructure in line with international principles, recommendations and standards.

95. As part of its 2024–2025 TC programme, Serbia was monitoring and evaluating nine national projects — four of them new — and 22 regional projects, half of which were new. It was also participating in technical and expert meetings, conferences, coordinated research activities, specialized missions and other activities organized by the Agency and had hosted multiple fellowships and regional workshops. Moreover, Serbian experts had taken part in a number of expert missions under the TC programme. Serbia was particularly grateful for the Agency's support in the field of human health, in particular in nuclear medicine and radionuclide therapy, radiopharmaceutical production, control of transboundary animal diseases and radiation safety.

96. During a recent expert mission to Serbia, the Section Head of the Division for Europe had met with high-level national representatives and had participated in a workshop, organized by the Serbian Radiation and Nuclear Safety and Security Directorate, on ways in which the Agency could assist Serbia in the development of a nuclear power programme through interregional TC projects. Furthermore, the Directorate was organizing — together with the Agency — a two-week advanced interregional course on nuclear law at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Law in October 2024, during which a number of presentations on nuclear law would be made by Agency experts.

97. In July 2024, his country had signed a memorandum of understanding on the development of nuclear energy applications in Serbia. The signatories included competent ministries, the Serbian regulatory body, institutes, public companies, faculties and other relevant organizations. The memorandum highlighted the importance of synergy between all State bodies and institutions and of international cooperation in the development of nuclear energy applications.

98. Serbia remained wholly committed to further developing its cooperation with the Agency so that its national professionals and experts could adopt good practices and apply expert knowledge. Thanks to its full support for the Agency's work, Serbia was sure to see significant improvements in radiation and nuclear safety and security.

99. Mr GŁOWACKI (Poland) said that his Government considered nuclear power to be a valuable dispatchable source of clean energy and a key industrial technology for combating climate change and ensuring energy security — something that had become all the more crucial owing to the Russian Federation's full-scale aggression against Ukraine.

100. According to the road map for Poland's nuclear power programme, 9 GW of nuclear power capacity would be put into operation by 2043. In April 2024, the Agency had carried out a Phase 2 INIR mission to Poland, which had produced a positive assessment of the country's readiness to continue the next phase of the programme, namely the start of construction on its first NPP. Poland also had an interest in SMR technology, which would complement that programme and contribute to faster decarbonization of its energy system, especially in such areas as industrial and district heating.

101. Poland continued its efforts to enhance and sustain nuclear safety and security. In September 2023, it had hosted an IRRS mission with the aim of reviewing and strengthening the governmental and regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety. Having also reviewed the country's regulatory readiness for the introduction of nuclear power, the mission had concluded that the nuclear safety regulatory infrastructure was adequate and the regulatory framework robust. There was still room for improvement, however, and Poland had invited an IRRS follow-up mission for 2027.

102. In December 2023, Poland had hosted an INSSP review mission. The INSSP process had proved helpful in developing domestic nuclear security solutions and bolstering coordination between all national stakeholders engaged in assuring the nuclear security of existing and planned nuclear facilities in the country. In order to further strengthen its nuclear security framework, Poland would consider inviting a new IPPAS mission as it advanced its preparations for the introduction of nuclear power.

103. Poland recognized the great value of the TC programme. Participation in national and regional TC projects in nuclear safety, radiation protection, nuclear power, medical and industrial applications and nuclear infrastructure development significantly contributed to Poland's sustainable development. His country would continue to support the TC programme, including by hosting events and fellowships and by providing national experts for Agency activities.

104. The Russian Federation had continued to pursue its illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and to threaten to use nuclear weapons against other countries. Moreover, Russian troops were illegally occupying Zaporizhzhya NPP in clear contradiction of the NPT, the Agency's Statute and numerous international nuclear safety and security regulations. The Russian Federation must immediately cease its occupation of Zaporizhzhya NPP and withdraw all military equipment. Poland would continue to assist the Agency by providing logistics and transportation support for its mission in Ukraine.

105. Poland had complete confidence in the ability of the Agency and the Director General to fulfil their mandates, especially in relation to NPT safeguards commitments. The Agency played an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT, and its safeguards system was a fundamental component of the non-proliferation regime.

106. Other global security challenges had also become even more visible. The DPRK was continuing its military nuclear and missile programmes, with no prospect of engaging in substantial negotiations. The DPRK must engage in denuclearization talks, comply fully with all UN Security Council resolutions and return to Agency safeguards and the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. The Director General's reports on Iran's implementation of the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) were also a cause for concern. Iran must return to a positive path and stop undermining the Agency's safeguards system and the effectiveness of the NPT.

107. Poland considered nuclear power to be a vital and necessary part of the future low-carbon global energy mix and shared the Agency's view that the use of nuclear power was in line with the SDGs. In that context, Poland highly valued the Agency's efforts to raise awareness of the advantages of nuclear power in international discussions on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. As a result of such efforts, the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP28) had, for the first time, recognized the role of nuclear power in the fight against climate change.

108. In closing, he expressed his country's strong and continued support for the Agency's activities. Poland had no doubt that nuclear power should always be included in the global climate and energy security debate, as the General Conference offered the opportunity to do.

109. Mr LABONTÉ (Canada) said that the Agency's contributions to collective peace, security and prosperity had never been more vital. In the face of shared challenges — such as climate change, energy security, the achievement of the SDGs and the efforts of various actors to undermine non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security — the multilateral system and its role in creating global solutions must be strengthened.

110. At the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, 25 countries, including Canada, had committed to tripling their nuclear capacity by 2050. Several Canadian jurisdictions were exploring possibilities for investment in that area, given its potential to enhance access to secure, low-emission baseload energy for the population. Furthermore, as a global leader in uranium extraction, Canada remained committed to supporting diversified and reliable uranium supply chains.

111. Canada was leading the way in the safe deployment of SMRs by conducting a regulatory review of a construction licence for a grid-scale SMR. In line with its strong belief that international collaboration enabled efficient regulatory reviews and could help move technology demonstration forwards, his country was pleased to support the Foundational Infrastructure for the Responsible Use of SMR Technology programme, designed to build capacity in over 31 States for the exploration and development of SMR technology.

112. In a continued demonstration of its commitment to nuclear excellence, Canada had recently hosted an IRRS follow-up mission, which had highlighted its comprehensive and robust regulatory framework. It was also proud to play a leading role in the Regulatory Cooperation Forum, sharing its experience and supporting other Member States in establishing competent and effective regulatory organizations.

113. The responsible deployment of nuclear technologies also required comprehensive, science-based waste and decommissioning plans. Environmental protection, public health and nuclear safety and security must remain at the heart of nuclear technology deployment, including waste management and handling practices, which required ongoing dialogue and meaningful engagement with indigenous peoples, local populations and communities, and civil society.

114. As the recently elected President of the Eighth Joint Convention Review Meeting, Canada looked forward to the success of the meeting and was committed to ensuring an apolitical process that supported a safe and sustainable future.

115. The Agency's efforts to advance gender equality and mainstream gender considerations in the delivery of its programmes were more important than ever. An unwavering advocate of such efforts, Canada was pleased to announce an additional contribution of CAD 2 million in continued support of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme, both of which made tangible contributions towards creating a more inclusive nuclear field.

116. The maintenance of nuclear security — a core activity of the Agency — and adherence to international non-proliferation obligations were fundamental for the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Canada underlined the paramount importance of robust safeguards implementation by all Member States, including through the application of the additional protocol, and backed the Agency's efforts to improve safeguards effectiveness and efficiency through the use of State-level safeguards approaches.

117. Canada remained seriously concerned at Iran's continued nuclear escalations, including its deployment of advanced centrifuges and its accumulation of uranium enriched to 60%, which had no justifiable civilian objectives. It called on Iran to work constructively with the Agency to address outstanding safeguards questions and to fully implement its legal obligations under its CSA. Canada was pleased to announce an additional contribution of CAD 2 million towards the Agency's verification and monitoring activities in Iran.

118. The DPRK's ongoing nuclear activities contradicted numerous Security Council resolutions and directly challenged regional and global security. The General Conference must continue to send a unanimous message on the importance of the DPRK fulfilling its non-proliferation and safeguards obligations.

119. Canada was proud to have provided CAD 4 million to support the Agency's efforts to uphold nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine, including through its ongoing presence at that country's Zaporizhzhya NPP. The Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its continued occupation of the plant continued to put the entire international community at risk. Canada deeply regretted that the Russian Federation had not heeded the numerous calls of the Board of Governors and the General Conference to withdraw its military and other unauthorized personnel from the plant.

120. In closing, he reaffirmed Canada's unequivocal support for the Agency and for the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

121. Mr MAMBETOV (Kyrgyzstan) said that, in recognition of the potential catastrophic consequences of radioactive contamination, his country placed the highest priority on radiation safety and the reclamation of uranium legacy sites inherited following its independence. Efforts in that regard needed to be significantly strengthened and aligned with the scale of the problem, and greater financial and other resources needed to be allocated.

122. One issue of utmost importance to the countries of Central Asia — and specifically to the Fergana Valley, where the interests of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan intersected and where 10 million of their citizens lived together in peace — was the remediation of uranium tailings, which posed a transboundary threat to the environmental safety of the entire region, especially in the event of intensified natural or climatic phenomena.

123. Kyrgyzstan highlighted the significance of the UN General Assembly's adoption, at its 73rd session, of a resolution on the role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia, which called for further international support to address uranium legacy sites in the region. The resolution — which his country had initiated — had brought the issue of uranium legacy sites to the forefront of international attention. In order to address that pressing problem and to support Central Asian countries, a multilateral fund known as the Environmental Remediation Account for Central Asia had been established at the initiative of the European Commission and the EBRD. Kyrgyzstan was grateful to the parties that had contributed to that fund, especially Belgium, the European Commission, Lithuania, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the USA. A total of €46 million had been raised thus far. The adoption of the resolution and the creation of the fund served as a solid basis for attracting further international assistance to ensure sustainable development.

124. A strategic master plan for the remediation of uranium legacy sites in Central Asia had been developed and approved in cooperation with the Agency. The plan served as a road map for the effective restoration of the sites, three of which were located in Kyrgyzstan, where significant progress had

already been made: reclamation work had been completed at the Min-Kush and Shekaftar sites, and work had begun at the Mailuu-Suu site. As a result of the reclamation work and the associated removal of contaminated waste, the environmental situation in the region had improved, safe living conditions and social rehabilitation services had been established for more than 80 000 residents, and the investment attractiveness of the surrounding areas had increased.

125. In addition, the Commonwealth of Independent States' inter-State target programme was being implemented in Kyrgyzstan, within the framework of which a further five sites were being reclaimed. He expressed his country's appreciation to the Russian Federation for its assistance in that regard.

126. Kyrgyzstan was concerned, however, that it would not be possible to complete the work under the master plan for the remediation of uranium legacy sites in Central Asia, owing to a funding shortfall of €40 million. It therefore called on the international community and donor countries to contribute to the Environmental Remediation Account for Central Asia in order to ensure the comprehensive environmental remediation of uranium tailings storage facilities, which had a direct impact on the ecological safety and well-being of the entire region.

127. In closing, he expressed his country's gratitude for the support provided in the field of radiation safety.

128. Ms CARVALHO (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), praising the Director General's leadership over the past year, said that the world had nonetheless reached a dangerous and deeply worrying juncture, in which the geopolitical landscape was fraught with tension and the international community faced the threat of a deadly nuclear conflagration. The Agency could not remain detached or isolated from that situation. As the Director General had emphasized in a newspaper interview in April 2024, when it came to mitigating nuclear risks, the Agency should not be merely a commentator or observer but rather should work actively under its mandate in order to bring about change. The promotion of general, complete and non-discriminatory disarmament and of the inalienable right of countries to develop and use nuclear science and technology peacefully to improve lives was the most efficient mechanism for creating solidarity among nations.

129. Venezuela had benefited greatly from the TC programme in national areas of strategic importance, such as human health, food security, agriculture, nutrition, water resources management and the disposal of radioactive sources, including through Rays of Hope and PACT. During the first half of 2024, her country had received ten international experts, and 291 individuals — more than 50% of whom were women — had received training through the Department of Technical Cooperation. In addition, the Government had decreed the establishment of the University of Sciences, which would offer a degree in nuclear energy developed in collaboration with the Latin American Network for Education in Nuclear Technology, thus promoting integration and relations in the Latin American region. Moreover, with the Agency's technical cooperation, Venezuela had worked hard to mobilize and safeguard disused sources and had begun construction of a new storage facility for temporarily disused sources. Furthermore, to boost its national cancer care capacity, Venezuela was establishing a nuclear medicine centre with a cyclotron for radiopharmaceutical production and gamma cameras for positron emission tomography and single photon emission computed tomography.

130. The Agency's technical assistance should therefore not be subject to political, economic or other conditions, given its importance for development and prosperity. Venezuela demanded the immediate removal of the reprehensible and illegal unilateral coercive measures that were stifling its cooperation with the Agency and preventing it from meeting its commitments, and called on States to respect the UN Charter in that regard.

131. Venezuela was a staunch defender of the true and just cause of the Palestinian people, especially as they faced the threat of genocide and the erasure of their identity. Palestine should be granted full

membership within the UN system and be allowed to benefit from the Agency's TC programme in line with General Conference resolution GC(67)/RES/14.

132. The situation in Palestine was devastating. Bombing had destroyed much of the hospital infrastructure, impeding treatment for serious illnesses such as cancer and disrupting the work of Rays of Hope. Venezuela called on the international community to advocate respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the inviolability of medical care. The Agency was urged to prioritize sending a mission to assess the risks resulting from the destruction of radiological equipment and the subsequent impact on health, and to meet the needs of the Palestinian people.

133. Member States could not turn a blind eye to the reality on the ground or apply double standards, denouncing nuclear threats in one part of the world while ignoring the situation in another. Just as Lise Meitner had spoken out against the military use of nuclear technologies, Venezuela sought to call attention to what was happening in the Palestinian State.

134. Venezuela reiterated its unwavering commitment to multilateral dialogue as the only path to the peaceful resolution of differences among States. As a founding member of the Agency, it recalled that the Agency's mission was to promote peace and ensure that the horrors brought about by the military use of nuclear energy were never repeated. On the centenary of the birth of Venezuelan scientist Dr Humberto Fernández-Morán — a student of Lise Meitner at the Nobel Institute for Physics and an advocate of the creation of the Agency — she echoed his statement to the Conference on the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, reaffirming Venezuela's earnest desire to collaborate so as to completely reverse the fearful trend of atomic military build-up and harness the potential of nuclear energy for peace and the well-being of humankind.

135. Mr HABEENZU (Zambia) said that, under the Director General's outstanding leadership, the Agency had continued to make remarkable progress and to play a crucial role in advancing the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology.

136. His country was pleased to note the increasing integration of nuclear science and technology into the national development strategies of many Member States, including his own, which was vital to address major global challenges, including food security and the spread of emerging diseases. Many of those challenges were being exacerbated by climate change, leading to extreme weather events such as prolonged droughts and severe flooding. In regions reliant on hydropower, severe droughts posed a threat to energy security.

137. Recognizing that many global challenges were being addressed using nuclear science and technology, Zambia commended the Agency for its ongoing efforts to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear technology worldwide and reaffirmed its commitment to collaborating with the Agency in that regard.

138. Zambia was implementing its second cancer control strategic plan, developed in 2022 with the aim of improving access to cancer treatment. It had started to upgrade its Cancer Diseases Hospital by decommissioning old equipment and reinstalling four advanced linear accelerators, two brachytherapy units and new diagnostic and simulation imaging equipment. Construction of a second radiotherapy treatment centre was expected to be completed by February 2025, and procurement of a third radiotherapy treatment centre was currently under way.

139. As Zambia prepared to open its new and refurbished radiotherapy centres, it would require the Agency's technical support. His country had been approved by the Agency for inclusion in the second wave of countries to participate in Rays of Hope, as a result of which it would receive a linear accelerator for use in one of those centres.

140. Throughout all those developments, Zambia would continue to provide regional training in the fields of radiotherapy technology, radiology and radiation oncology. In order to strengthen its work in that regard, his country would establish its first cyclotron facility and install positron emission tomography–computed tomography scanners at various locations in the country.

141. Having identified the fisheries and livestock sectors as key drivers of economic growth and diversification, Zambia was implementing a strategic plan aimed at enhancing productivity in those sectors using nuclear technology.

142. With the Agency’s support, Zambia’s capacity to diagnose zoonotic and transboundary animal diseases had been strengthened. It was also constructing a new vaccine plant to improve the control and prevention of such diseases.

143. In the agricultural sector, his country had, thanks to the Agency’s assistance, developed improved cowpea varieties with a 25% higher grain yield potential, which also showed increased resistance to diseases and greater tolerance to adverse weather conditions. Zambia was implementing a four-year TC project to develop further improved crop varieties that were high-yielding and efficient in terms of both water and fertilizer use.

144. Zambia was conducting a radiological environmental dose mapping exercise to determine the levels of naturally occurring radioactivity, which would provide baseline data essential for strengthening regulatory programmes in the country. It was also working to bolster its regulatory framework to ensure that all nuclear technology applications were effectively regulated. Furthermore, with the Agency’s technical support, Zambia had developed regulations on radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and the management of naturally occurring radioactive materials.

145. Commending AFRA for its tireless efforts in providing technical support to its Government Parties, Zambia reaffirmed its commitment to continue collaborating with that organization. In July 2024, the Zambian Parliament had approved the country’s accession to the most recent extension of AFRA, and Zambia expected to submit its instruments of accession to the Agency shortly.

146. Zambia remained firmly committed to the Agency’s mission and stood ready to collaborate for their mutual benefit.

147. Mr AHMED (Nigeria), complimenting the excellent arrangements for the General Conference, said that, thanks to the Agency’s significant role in the safe deployment of nuclear science and technology for the socioeconomic development of Member States, several African Member States, including Nigeria, had been able to strengthen arrangements for the integration of nuclear technologies into their overall energy mix. To that end, Nigeria had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with China on the development of nuclear energy and human resources. Nigeria anticipated that the partnership would support its nuclear energy programme.

148. A high-level regional seminar on promoting cancer awareness and advocacy programmes in member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation had been held in Abuja in May 2024. Nigeria commended the Director General’s participation in the event, during which participants had discussed measures to achieve equitable access to cancer diagnosis and treatment within the framework of Rays of Hope. Nigeria was confident that such efforts would lead to the success of that initiative and would provide benefiting countries with access to affordable, high-quality cancer management services.

149. The Director General had held discussions with senior government officials, including the Vice-President, on Nigeria’s TC programme and had visited a number of institutions where Agency projects were being implemented. Such efforts were commendable, helping to foster cordial relations between the Agency and Member States.

150. Nigeria had recently celebrated 20 years of the safe and successful operation of Nigeria Research Reactor-1 — a milestone that would not have been possible without the Agency's support. His country assured the Agency and other partners that it would continue to operate the reactor within the ambit of the relevant international regulations and instruments.

151. In March 2011, an imPACT Review mission had been conducted in Nigeria to assess the country's cancer control capacities and needs and to identify effective priority interventions for responding to the country's cancer burden. In preparation for receiving a second such mission, Nigeria had established a national team and had commenced preliminary discussions with the Agency in order to address the surging number of cancer cases in the country in a seamless and efficient manner.

152. As part of its collaboration with the Agency throughout 2024, Nigeria had hosted Agency activities, including coordination meetings for regional projects on enhancing Member States' capacities for improved cancer diagnosis and treatment and on enhancing radiation safety infrastructure. His country was satisfied with the success of those events and looked forward to hosting more Agency activities.

153. Nigeria welcomed the theme of the 2024 Scientific Forum, 'Atoms4Food — Better Agriculture for Better Life', which came at a time when food insecurity was growing at an alarming rate in many countries. Given the threat to human survival, the global community must adopt nuclear techniques that included multisectoral partnerships to identify global solutions for the attainment of SDG 2, on creating a world free of hunger by 2030.

154. Nigeria welcomed the Agency's organization of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in November 2024. The Conference was expected to provide an opportunity for Member States to engage in high-level dialogue and proffer solutions to emerging global issues that hindered sustainable development.

155. Nigeria appreciated the Agency's role in facilitating an expert mission to the country in June 2024 to review the stakeholder engagement strategy document for its NPP. The mission's observations served as a guide for ensuring effective and constructive engagement in the development and life cycle of the plant.

156. Thanks to the Agency's efforts to disseminate critical information on the evolution of SMRs and microreactors, Member States had been able to consider the various SMR technologies and make informed decisions on an individual country basis. In that regard, the International Conference on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications, scheduled for October 2024, would provide key stakeholders with a platform for robust engagement in exploring technologies that could be tailored to meet country-specific needs.

157. With new partnerships, collaboration and concerted efforts to domesticate nuclear technology, Nigeria hoped that it would transition from a recipient country to a donor country in the near future.

Ms Kitsell (United Kingdom), Vice-President, took the Chair.

158. Mr BHATIA (Singapore) said that the Agency played a key role in navigating the rapidly evolving nuclear landscape and connecting nuclear applications with global efforts to meet climate goals and achieve sustainable development. With the recent launch of Atoms4Food and the progress made in initiatives such as Rays of Hope, ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastics, the Agency had responded to new demands for assistance.

159. In order to safely harness the full potential of nuclear energy, regulations and guidelines must keep pace with advancing technologies and new applications. In that regard, the Agency played a vital role in upholding nuclear safety, security and safeguards standards, which must remain up to date with

innovations such as SMRs and transportable NPPs. Singapore looked forward to learning more about such developments at the Agency's first International Conference on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications in October 2024, at which his country would be well represented.

160. National and regional nuclear safety was a priority for his country, which was why it had actively engaged in the work of the Safety Standards Committees, including in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee, to review the Agency's safety standards documents with the aim of ensuring that they reflected high international standards for the peaceful use of nuclear and radiation applications.

161. Singapore had proudly sponsored the draft resolution on nuclear and radiation safety submitted for adoption by the General Conference, which highlighted the work of ASEANTOM — in which Singapore had been an active participant since its establishment in 2013 — in the areas of EPR, environmental radiation monitoring and the transport of radioactive materials in the region. The Practical Arrangements between ASEAN and the Agency had elevated the institutional links between the two organizations; in 2024, his country would lead the renewal process on the Arrangements for a further five-year term. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was expected to convey a letter to the Agency regarding the renewal in the near future.

162. Singapore continued to emphasize the need for a strong global nuclear security framework and to support the Agency's central role in providing sound nuclear security guidance. Any loss or theft of nuclear or radioactive material posed an unacceptable risk. His country applauded efforts to promote greater adherence to and full implementation of the CPPNM and its Amendment. For its part, it had participated in ICONS 2024 and had endorsed the Co-Presidents' statement.

163. The Agency's TC programme helped Member States leverage nuclear science and technology to achieve the SDGs. Singapore had pledged €475 300 to the TCF for 2025 and urged all Member States to pay their contributions on time and in full.

164. Beyond financial support, Singapore also provided in-kind assistance through training courses and workshops to strengthen regional capabilities, including on the use of SIT and non-destructive testing. It looked forward to further collaborating with the Agency under the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme and to participating in the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in November 2024.

165. Singapore was also working closely with the Agency to promote peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The Centre for Ion Beam Applications at the National University of Singapore was Singapore's first Collaborating Centre, and his country hoped to do more with the Agency in that area in future.

166. All NPT States Parties had a duty to fulfil their legally binding safeguards obligations. Nonetheless, the international community continued to face tough challenges relating to non-compliance with those obligations, which were exacerbated by the current geopolitical environment. Such issues required durable solutions; the Agency's role was critical in that regard.

167. Singapore remained concerned about Iran's lack of progress in resolving its outstanding safeguards issues. While it recognized the particular context of the JCPOA, Singapore emphasized that Iran must meet its obligations under its CSA. It was hoped that the recent exchanges between the Iranian President and the Agency would soon lead to a visit by the Director General to Iran and to the establishment of constructive dialogue that would lead to tangible results.

168. Singapore was also gravely concerned at the Agency's assessment that the situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya NPP remained precarious. All parties to the conflict must refrain from any action that

could compromise the Seven Pillars or the Five Principles, which were applicable to all NPPs and must be respected.

169. The DPRK's continued expansion of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes remained a cause for concern. Singapore urged the DPRK to immediately cease all provocative actions that might raise tensions on the Korean Peninsula and to fully abide by its long-standing international obligations and commitments, including under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. His country had consistently and rigorously implemented those resolutions by giving full legal effect to the sanctions provided in them and by prosecuting those who violated the relevant laws.

170. Singapore reaffirmed its strong support for the Agency as it sought to tackle new challenges while maintaining its impartiality, integrity and professionalism, and looked forward to working with Member States and the Secretariat to ensure that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy benefited everyone.

171. Mr JOHNSON (Ghana) said that his country was grateful to the Agency and its development partners for their cooperation in the areas of agriculture, health, nuclear energy, industry, the environment, radiation and nuclear safety, nuclear security and human resources development. It looked forward to sustaining and strengthening those partnerships.

172. Ghana's efforts to implement its nuclear power programme were progressing steadily. Having issued a follow-up request for information in 2023 and having conducted a number of discussions with prospective vendors, Ghana had signed two cooperation framework agreements for an SMR and a conventional large reactor in 2024. Successful negotiations with two vendors would mean that the two projects could be implemented concurrently.

173. The support provided by the Agency through various TC projects had continued to enhance the competences of personnel from the Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, thereby strengthening the Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organization.

174. Ghana had renewed its bilateral technical cooperation with both the USA and Japan in 2023, resulting in agreements and commitments geared towards building the capacities of actors in Ghana's nuclear industry. Those engagements would culminate in the establishment of a regional clean energy training centre, an SMR simulator and a regional welding certification programme for the nuclear industry. Ghana's nuclear programme also benefited from academic opportunities provided by other advanced nuclear countries, including China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

175. Ghana was working towards upgrading and expanding its secondary standards dosimetry laboratory and its personnel monitoring services and had established an internal dosimetry laboratory to complement its radiation safety infrastructure. In addition, capacity-building activities in radioactive waste management were ongoing for the staff of stakeholder organizations, notably on the borehole disposal concept and on preparations for introducing nuclear power.

176. The Nuclear Regulatory Authority continued to leverage both national experience and the experience and expertise of Ghana's international partners, including the Agency, the European Commission — through the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation — the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa, the Regulatory Cooperation Forum and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, with a view to further strengthening its robust regulatory regime by developing the capacities of its staff and improving its management systems.

177. In a collaboration between various State institutions, the radon gas monitoring programme — initially launched in workplaces — had been extended to homes and schools to ensure public safety. Awareness programmes had also been rolled out to educate the public on the health effects of radon exposure. The development of a national radon map was also under discussion as part of the national radon monitoring programme.

178. In April 2024, under the auspices of the Agency, Ghana had received experts from the US National Electrostatics Corporation to assist in the optimization of the country's Pelletron accelerator in order to increase the ion beam transmission. The accelerator was now ready for use in further research by universities and research institutions.

179. Implementation of NUTEC Plastics in Ghana was progressing. In July 2024, a number of national professionals had completed a training course in Tunisia on marine microplastic monitoring. In addition, Ghana was scheduled to receive an attenuated total reflectance-fourier transform infrared system to enhance marine microplastic monitoring, which would enable the country to contribute to efforts to combat marine plastic pollution.

180. The national isotope hydrology laboratory continued to benefit from training opportunities under AFRA regional project RAF7021 on the enhancement, planning, management and sustainable utilization of water resources, with scholarship support from the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education.

181. The national cancer control plan had been earmarked for review with the aim of aligning it with the country's revised non-communicable diseases policy and strategy for 2022–2030. Ghana would be grateful to receive an imPACT mission to review the plan.

182. The provision of training for radiation medicine professionals in Ghana had been enhanced through the Global Medical Physics Training and Development Programme, established in a collaboration between academic and clinical institutions in Ghana and the University of Pennsylvania with the aim of providing training and of opening up collaborative research and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Agency, Ghana was working to establish two new postgraduate programmes at the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences — a Master of Philosophy in radiobiology and a Master of Philosophy in applied human nutrition and nuclear techniques — to train students from Ghana and the subregion.

183. His country appreciated the Agency's efforts to assist Member States in transitioning from radioactive sources to machine sources for radiation processing. Furthermore, it was grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the regional meeting of high-level representatives on the adoption of electron beams and X-ray technologies for sustainable socioeconomic advancement in Africa. Following the meeting, Ghana had begun work to replace the gamma irradiation facility at the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission with an electron beam facility. It welcomed the continued provision of support from the Agency and other donor countries in that regard. Furthermore, a feasibility study for the establishment of a commercial electron beam facility was currently in progress.

184. Atoms4Food had proved transformative for agriculture and food systems in Africa. Ghana was pleased with the leadership of the Division for Africa, which was integrating various thematic areas of nuclear applications in food and agriculture and promoting sustainable food and nutrition security and food safety across the continent. His country was confident that such an approach would empower Ghana and other Member States to enhance their agricultural and food systems.

185. Ghana looked forward to co-chairing the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme in November 2024. It strongly encouraged Member States to participate actively in the Conference at the ministerial level and to involve their development institutions in their preparations for and participation in the Conference.

186. 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 sustainable development for the benefit of humanity.

187. Ms BARJAKTAROVIĆ LANZARDI (Montenegro) said that her country aligned itself with the statement of the European Union.

188. The Agency had made an invaluable contribution to global peace and security and to scientific development throughout the years. The Agency's response, in line with its mandate, to the current major global challenges was testament to the indispensable role that it played across various fields, including in addressing health and food, the energy crisis and climate change, and geopolitical stability and security, most notably with respect to the highly precarious situation in Ukraine.

189. Montenegro was extremely worried about 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. Her country had made its position clear at the outset and had repeatedly aligned itself with various EU resolutions, declarations and statements that unequivocally condemned the Russian Federation's unjustified aggression against Ukraine. Montenegro praised the profound commitment and diligence of the Director General and his team in their valorous efforts to ameliorate the situation at Zaporizhzhya NPP, thereby contributing to global nuclear safety and security. Her country had full trust in the Director General's work and his guidance of all the Agency's future activities.

190. Montenegro strongly supported the Agency's activities, structures and platforms, regulatory norms, standards and guidelines, technical assistance programmes and laboratories. It was extremely grateful to the Secretariat and its staff, who worked with the utmost professionalism and expert rigor to deliver results in an unbiased, objective and independent manner. Montenegro highly appreciated their tireless dedication, which was essential for ensuring safety and security.

191. As a country without a nuclear industry, Montenegro used ionizing radiation in medicine, environmental management, biotechnology, cultural heritage protection, education and research. It had established a centralized radioactive waste storage facility with the Agency's support in 2012. Montenegro was aware of the importance of the proper use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the need to continuously improve radiation and nuclear safety and security worldwide.

192. Her Government had established strategic, legislative and regulatory frameworks for nuclear liability, nuclear safeguards and radiation and nuclear safety and security. Montenegro was also party to all legally binding and non-legally binding international instruments deposited with the Agency and was ready to implement the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its two supplementary guidance documents.

193. In May 2024, the Parliament of Montenegro had adopted a new law that contained provisions on the protection of the life and health of people and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation; the import, export and transport of radioactive sources, including ionizing radiation sources, and nuclear materials; the management of radioactive waste; and other issues of importance for radiation and nuclear safety and security. In order to further strengthen its national nuclear security regime, Montenegro had recently held, with the Agency's support, a national workshop on updating and developing its new INSSP.

194. Since the previous regular session of the General Conference, her country had produced an assessment report on its national disaster risk management capability, which presented a detailed analysis of the country's technical, administrative and financial capacities, including in the area of radiation and nuclear energy. In addition, Montenegro had developed a draft disaster risk reduction strategy for 2025–2030 — which addressed radiation and nuclear risks — and an action plan for 2025–2026, which would be submitted to the Government for final adoption by the end of 2024.

195. In view of the geopolitical situation with regard to nuclear safety and security, Montenegro's working team for coordination and radioactivity monitoring had continued its work throughout 2024, including in managing the national system for risk assessment and forecasting in case of a radiation or nuclear accident, which now operated non-stop.

196. Montenegro remained committed to strengthening its regulatory infrastructure in order to enhance human capacity, condition its remaining sources, explore possibilities for reusing and recycling disused sealed sources, and conduct analyses of the further management of disused sealed radioactive sources and radioactive waste.

197. 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 TC programmes. The CPF signed between Montenegro and the Agency for 2022–2027 had defined new priorities and deepened the country's cooperation with the Agency. Her country was a strong advocate of ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, Rays of Hope and Atoms4Food. Moreover, as a country with significant water potential, Montenegro highly appreciated the Agency's support in the field of underground and surface water activities. Furthermore, Montenegro would, with the Agency's support, host two events in the field of human health and veterinary medicine by the end of 2024.

198. Montenegro was firmly committed to the successful implementation of those initiatives and of other joint activities, especially in the area of cancer therapy. It was also committed to paying its contribution to the TCF.

Mr Ham Sang Wook (Republic of Korea), President, resumed the Chair.

199. Mr ALZAYANI (Bahrain), praising the Director General's work to help the Agency achieve its aims, as detailed in the Annual Report for 2023, said that the Agency played a central role in preventing the proliferation of WMDs and combating the threat that they posed to international peace and security, in line with the NPT and other relevant reference documents.

200. Bahrain remained firmly committed to establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and WMDs, in line with the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Emphasizing that the elimination of nuclear weapons was the only way to guarantee that they would not be used, Bahrain called on all States in the region to accede to the NPT and place all their nuclear programmes and facilities under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards. The position of the leadership of Bahrain on the issue reflected the priority that it accorded to policies to combat proliferation and ensure regional and international safety, security and stability.

201. Bahrain called on all States in the Middle East to accede to all agreements on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to fulfil their international commitments regarding the application of Agency safeguards. Given the current tensions in the region, such measures were essential to build mutual confidence and pave the way for the establishment of an NWFZ.

202. While reaffirming the right of all States to use and benefit from the wide range of peaceful nuclear applications, Bahrain called on Iran to resolve all outstanding issues so that the Agency could provide assurance regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in that country. A unified global strategy and mechanism needed to be developed urgently to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMDs and ensure nuclear disarmament, especially in the Middle East.

203. Bahrain looked forward to a greater exchange of nuclear knowledge, techniques and other safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in order to achieve the greatest impact in the Agency's work. It greatly valued its cooperation with the Agency, especially through the TC programme, which was helping attain the SDGs and build national capacities in the areas of health, the environment and in response to nuclear and radiological emergencies.

204. Over the preceding year, Bahrain had participated in the majority of the conferences, meetings and specialized workshops organized by the Agency. In line with Bahrain's obligations as a Member State, the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons of Mass Destruction played a key role in implementing relevant agreements by providing guidance to government bodies,

and legislation had also been adopted to strengthen the safety and security of radioactive material and protect workers in the nuclear field.

205. Bahrain remained fully confident that the work of the General Conference and the opportunities for the exchange of views that it provided would contribute to the goal of atoms for peace, security and environmental protection.

206. Mr ÁLVAREZ CAMPOS (El Salvador) said that, in recent years, his country had made significant progress, including in transforming from one of the most violent countries in the Western hemisphere to one of the safest. Nonetheless, many challenges remained.

207. Through the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology and the implementation of public policy, El Salvador sought to encourage economic and scientific development to guarantee a reliable and sustainable electricity supply and to achieve tangible benefits in areas such as agriculture, health, industry and the environment. Aware of the importance of mitigating the severe effects of climate change, El Salvador was seeking to achieve a true energy transition by developing renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric, solar, wind and geothermal power, which had been crucial for reducing its fossil fuel dependence. Under the President's leadership, his country had started to diversify its energy mix with the aim of reducing its reliance on external resources, protecting the environment and, most importantly, providing affordable, life-changing electricity to the population.

208. To that end, El Salvador was committed to introducing nuclear power in accordance with the highest international standards and the agreements that it had concluded with the Agency. In March 2024, it had deposited with the Agency its instrument of acceptance of the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its instruments of accession to the CNS and to the Vienna Convention. It would continue its internal review with a view to acceding to other international instruments governing the use of nuclear energy for peace and development.

209. In July 2024, his Government had approved a law on the creation of an organization responsible for developing and executing national plans and policies to implement the national nuclear power programme. El Salvador was currently in Phase 1 of the Milestones approach and had made substantial progress in establishing a clear road map. With international cooperation and the Agency's continued support, his country was confident that it could successfully introduce nuclear power, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and prosperous future for its people.

210. The Agency's ability to carry out its remarkable work relied on the financial contributions of all Member States. El Salvador had therefore met all its financial commitments to the Agency.

211. El Salvador was grateful for the invaluable technical cooperation and support provided by the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean, which had enabled it to identify and establish opportunities for collaboration in implementing the Milestones approach during the development of its national nuclear power infrastructure. In that regard, he reiterated his country's commitment to continuing to participate actively in the Agency's activities by exchanging experiences, knowledge and practices in the development of nuclear energy and in its peaceful and transformative use. El Salvador might be a small country, but it was making real progress thanks to the Agency's support.

212. Mr AGUSMAN (Indonesia) said that his country welcomed the Agency's notable progress in strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation efforts while also promoting international cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was unfortunate, however, that the world was continuing to grapple with global and security tensions. Moreover, it was worrying that nuclear-armed States were prioritizing their nuclear arsenals over non-proliferation and disarmament. Indonesia had observed the lack of consensus at the 2023 and 2024 meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference and the growing distrust between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

213. States must continue to support the Agency's crucial role in assisting Member States in fulfilling their obligations. Indonesia remained committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, the promotion of which was critical to global welfare. His country's respect for international standards and agreements underpinned its commitment to using nuclear technology for the good of humankind.

214. Indonesia was proud to actively participate in several of the Agency's flagship initiatives, including NUTEC Plastics, ZODIAC, Rays of Hope, Atoms4NetZero and Atoms4Food, which provided vital support and expertise for helping Indonesia overcome challenges in the attainment of the SDGs and improve its capabilities in health, food security and environmental protection.

215. Indonesia remained committed to the TC programme, which was essential for capacity building in Member States, especially developing countries. Through technical cooperation, Indonesia promoted the peaceful use of nuclear technology in various sectors, yielding significant benefits in areas such as health, agriculture, industry and environmental protection.

216. In line with its ambition to reach net zero emissions by 2060, Indonesia was exploring the development of SMRs and other advanced nuclear energy technologies. It was currently establishing an organization to coordinate nuclear energy development initiatives and ensure that the country's nuclear energy programme was developed, implemented and managed effectively and in line with international safety standards. The growing demand for energy in Indonesia and the country's commitment to reducing carbon emissions made nuclear energy a compelling option. Indonesia planned to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and integrate nuclear energy into its energy mix in order to generate reliable power and cut greenhouse gas emissions for a more sustainable future.

217. Indonesia was aware of the ongoing discussions on naval nuclear propulsion. It was hoped that those discussions would contribute to the Agency's safeguards regime. Given the importance of the issue, there was a common understanding among Member States that transparent, open and inclusive dialogue on the matter should continue as a means of strengthening the existing safeguards regime. To that end, Indonesia had convened a side event during the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference, held in July 2024. The contributions from the panellists and the audience had enriched its understanding and provided valuable perspectives. It was hoped that States would continue fostering open dialogue on the issue, especially within the Agency.

218. Indonesia was deeply committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology and to its partnership with the Agency. It would continue to support and engage in the Agency's initiatives that advanced the collective goals of safety, security and sustainability. Together, States could harness the potential of nuclear technology to address global challenges and improve human and global welfare.

219. Ms FREIJE MURILLO (Honduras), underscoring that the Agency's promotion of peaceful nuclear applications for development made a valuable contribution to peace and security and directly supported the achievement of the SDGs, said that her country was grateful to the Agency for its continued provision of assistance through the TC programme, which had enhanced Honduras's human resource capacities in the safe use of nuclear applications. In addition to its cross-cutting work to strengthen radiation safety, Honduras was constructing a bunker in a public hospital to house its first linear accelerator and implementing projects to improve seeds and soils, enhance water resources management and tackle plastic pollution on the Caribbean coast.

220. The Agency was an important partner for Honduras, and its support had a tangible impact on Honduran families. Her Government attached priority to addressing health, food security and the diseases transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito; the latter issue was particularly pressing, as such diseases took a heavy human and economic toll on the country each year. The support provided by the Agency's expert missions to implement SIT was therefore appreciated. Her country was also

participating in NUTEC Plastics to protect marine biodiversity, as the country's reefs were one of its most popular tourist attractions.

221. For Honduras, the continued application of nuclear technology through the TC programme, in strict compliance with the Agency's standards and nuclear safeguards, was essential; in that regard, it remained committed to upholding the safeguards regime in order to ensure that nuclear technology was used exclusively for peace and development. It would continue to collaborate actively with the Agency and the private sector to improve the sustainability of its programmes and projects and address recurrent problems.

222. In light of the multitude of global challenges, it was vital to develop strong partnerships to support the Agency's work in promoting the use of nuclear applications for peace and development in Member States. In that regard, Honduras was making strides in increasing women's involvement in nuclear science and technology through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner Programme.

223. Mr CHHE (Cambodia), expressing gratitude to the Director General and the Secretariat for their leadership and exceptional efforts over the past year, said that his country fully supported nuclear non-proliferation and was actively engaged in ensuring nuclear safety, security and safeguards at the national, regional and international levels. Moreover, it was a signatory to numerous international treaties, conventions and agreements dedicated to enhancing nuclear and radiation safety, security and safeguards.

224. In August 2023, Cambodia had affirmed its political commitment to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary guidance. His country was actively considering joining additional international conventions to reinforce its dedication to nuclear safety and security, including the Amendment to the CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Its commitment in that area was enshrined in its national Constitution, which explicitly prohibited the manufacture, use and storage of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

225. Furthermore, Cambodia had established a number of authorities responsible for managing nuclear and radioactive materials and activities, including the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Secretariat of the National Counterterrorism Committee and the National Authority of Chemical Weapons. It also worked closely with international partners on such matters, including the development of legislation, the application of nuclear science and technology in health, industry and agriculture, and safety and security activities.

226. As the world grappled with the urgent need to transition to low-carbon energy sources in order to combat climate change, nuclear power presented a viable and scalable solution. Although Cambodia had no intention of developing a nuclear power programme anytime soon, it recognized that nuclear energy was one of the most efficient and reliable sources of electricity generation available, producing vast amounts of energy with minimal greenhouse gas emissions.

227. Nuclear technology also played a vital role in the fields of medicine and agriculture. Nuclear medicine had revolutionized the diagnosis and treatment of numerous diseases, including cancer. Similarly, the application of isotopes in agriculture had helped improve crop yields and resilience to pests and diseases, thereby enhancing food security and supporting sustainable agricultural practices. Under Cambodia's national TC programme, the Ministry of Mines and Energy had been actively coordinating with relevant national stakeholders to advance the peaceful uses of nuclear technology with the aim of integrating nuclear medicine into cancer treatment strategies — thereby improving health care services and patient outcomes — and utilizing nuclear techniques to ensure food safety, bolster agricultural practices and secure the country's food supply.

228. While nuclear materials and technology, including ionizing radiation, offered significant benefits, they also posed substantial risks. To realize the full potential of nuclear technology, it was therefore necessary to prioritize nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation.

229. In embracing the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, States must also advocate public awareness and education in order to demystify nuclear science and its advantages and address public concerns and misconceptions. Engaging communities in constructive dialogue regarding the benefits and safety of nuclear technology would lead to greater acceptance and collaboration.

230. The peaceful uses of nuclear technology held considerable promise for building a more sustainable, resilient and secure future for all. From clean energy generation to advancements in health care and agriculture, the benefits were profound and wide-ranging. Governments, scientists, industries and communities must work together to ensure that nuclear technology was harnessed responsibly and effectively for the betterment of humanity.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.