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36th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 17 November 2021, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

has held that important office in the 65 years of the IAEA's history.

Agenda item 91

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/76/232)

Draft resolution (A/76/L.10)

The President: In accordance with General Assembly decision 76/503, of 17 September, I now introduce the pre-recorded statement of Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to introduce the report of the Agency for the year 2020.

A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see A/76/641).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.10.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): I am pleased and honoured to introduce to the General Assembly draft resolution A/76/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", in the Republic of Korea's capacity as Chair of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the period from September 2021 to September 2022. This is the first time that the Republic of Korea

As one of the leading countries in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Republic of Korea is an active contributor to and staunch advocate for the Agency's work to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, foster nuclear safety and security, and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of humankind.

Our chairmanship of the IAEA Board of Governors is a reflection of my Government's unyielding support for the Agency and its mandate of "Atoms for peace and development".

The draft resolution before the General Assembly today (A/76/L.10) derives from a requirement pursuant to the IAEA Statute and the 1957 Agreement governing the relationship between the United Nations and the IAEA. It is the means by which the Assembly takes stock of and recognizes the work of the Agency. This year's draft text is a factual update of last year's resolution 75/6, taking note of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the IAEA General Conference at his sixty-fifth regular session and reiterating the strong support of member States of the Agency and its mandated activities.

Following consultations held in Vienna on 18 October, the draft resolution was unanimously approved for transmission to the General Assembly. I would like to thank all sponsors, which are now 69 in number, for their support.

In accordance with decision 76/503 of 17 September 2021, and without setting a precedent for future plenary meetings, the official records of the General Assembly will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by officials invited to make a statement or present a report, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to estatements@un.org.

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We hope the General Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/76/L.10 without a vote, thereby stressing the importance the international community attaches to the IAEA and the wide scope of its work.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Ms. Tolstoi (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We are very pleased to support draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232), a report which once again reaffirms the indispensable role of the Agency. We note with satisfaction the strong cross-regional support expressed in this context for the work of IAEA Director General Grossi and his staff in these difficult times marked by coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We underline the importance of respecting the authority and integrity of the IAEA, which has fulfilled its duties in the service of the international community in a professional, objective and impartial manner.

The empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming are important cross-cutting objectives for all international organizations. We welcome the IAEA Director General's commitment and initiatives in this regard, notably, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, with significant financial contributions from the EU and its member States, as well as his recent report entitled *Personnel: Women in the Secretariat*.

The EU remains fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Ahead of the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we reiterate our firm support for the full, complete, and effective implementation of the NPT. We will continue to support the Treaty's universalization and enhance its implementation across all three pillars.

The EU also reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, based on arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. For that purpose, the EU is funding a dedicated United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research project.

The IAEA safeguards system is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. We underline the primary responsibility of the Security Council in cases of non-compliance. Proliferation crises continue to be a threat to international and regional peace and security, and we need to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to them.

At this critical point in time, the EU reaffirms its resolute commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The EU acknowledges the issues connected to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the reimposition of sanctions by it. Alongside the verified full implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions is an essential part of the agreement. The EU continues to uphold its JCPOA commitments, including on the lifting of sanctions.

We express grave concern at Iran's escalating nuclear programme and continued actions inconsistent with the JCPOA, and with severe — and in the case of research and development activities, irreversible — proliferation implications. We strongly urge Iran to reverse all activities inconsistent with the JCPOA and return without delay to its full implementation, including of all transparency measures.

The EU welcomes IAEA updates on its verification and monitoring activities of Iran's nuclear commitments under the JCPOA in the light of resolution 2231 (2015) and on the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol in Iran. The EU urges Iran to cooperate in full with the IAEA without any further delay or conditionality to resolve all pending safeguards issues.

The EU supports the intensive diplomatic efforts within the JCPOA Joint Commission and the contacts of the EU High Representative as JCPOA Coordinator with all relevant partners. The EU welcomes the prospect of a meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA on 29 November in Vienna, with participants continuing

the discussions on the modalities to ensure the return to full and effective implementation of the JCPOA.

The continued development of the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is gravely concerning. The EU urges the Democratic People's Republic to embark on a credible path towards a declaration on complete, verifiable and reversible denuclearization. Until then, the EU will continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions and urge all countries to do the same. We also urge the Democratic People's Republic to engage in meaningful discussions with all relevant parties, as the international community works towards lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula, as well as to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions, return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards at an early date, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The EU urges the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate promptly and transparently with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues, including through concluding and implementing an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

The EU continues to call for the universalization of comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with the Additional Protocol without delay, as the current verification standard. The EU has launched a series of diplomatic activities to promote the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system. We urge the remaining States to amend their small quantities protocols or apply the comprehensive safeguards agreement in full, especially those States that are already embarking on a nuclear-power or radiation-technology programme.

The EU strongly supports the continued improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation through further development and implementation of State-level approaches. Furthermore, the EU is actively supporting the Agency's safeguard system through the European Commission's Safeguards Support Programme, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and through EU member States' own support programmes.

The EU and its member States attach utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety. Over the past decades, we have established and further developed an advanced, legally binding nuclear-safety framework applicable in all EU member States. The EU

continues to provide its expertise in neighbouring and third countries, with a view to building a more robust, sustainable and transparent international nuclear-safety framework. The new European instrument for international nuclear-safety cooperation, with a budget of €300 million for 2021-2027, will open further cooperation possibilities in the areas of nuclear safety, nuclear-waste management and decommissioning and safeguards.

We reaffirm our strong political commitment to and support for the universalization and implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which remain a priority for the EU. We acknowledge the need to foster international cooperation on all aspects related to advanced nuclear technologies, including in the review of applicability of safety standards for small and medium-sized or modular reactors. We encourage IAEA member States to invite the Agency to conduct safety-review missions, timely implement recommendations and publish full reports in the interest of transparency.

The EU stresses the need to continue strengthening nuclear security worldwide, in order to prevent nuclear terrorism and the misuse of nuclear and radioactive material. To that end, we highlight the importance of becoming party to and fully implementing the relevant treaties, notably the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016). The EU also reaffirms the importance of the 2020 International Conference on Nuclear Security, including the related ministerial declaration.

The IAEA has a central role to play in improving the global nuclear-security framework by strengthening international cooperation, offering advisory services and providing technical assistance to member States. Together with its member States, the EU remains a major donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, with almost €60 million allocated through several EU joint actions and Council decisions since 2004. Additionally, the EU and its member States support the universalization and implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism through an ongoing €5 million contribution to the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

For the period 2021-2027, the EU has dedicated €175 million to the EU's regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk-mitigation centres of excellence initiative.

The EU fully recognizes the benefits of multilateral approaches to the nuclear-fuel cycle while ensuring that high standards of safety and security as well as safeguards are implemented. The EU has contributed to the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank with nearly €25 million.

Finally, the EU strongly supports the Agency's activities and efforts in raising awareness on all aspects of the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies and on their application for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nuclear technologies make life-changing contributions to the health and well-being of people around the world. We also acknowledge the role played by nuclear technologies in relation to global efforts aimed at limiting climate change and mitigating its negative effects.

The Agency's assistance to Member States to combat the most recent zoonotic disease outbreak was most welcome and needs to continue. Again, we commend the work of the Agency in addressing the current COVID-19 pandemic and encourage further close cooperation with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant international organizations.

The EU continues to be the second largest contributor to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, thus supporting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, also through the provision of technical expertise and with an average contribution of €20 million per year.

Mr. Issetov (Kazakhstan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

At the outset, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan would like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its noteworthy report (see A/76/232), which reflects the Agency's balanced and effective policy with regard to the key mandates of nuclear safety and security as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We welcome the Agency's activities to implement safeguards through a system to uphold the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime.

We wholeheartedly support the Agency's proposed project to establish the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank, which will clearly enhance developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and thereby strengthen global nuclear security.

We support General Assembly draft resolution A/76/L.10 entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which we are indeed pleased to endorse. This reflects our deep conviction and commitment to the Agency's important role in fulfilling its mandate in support of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and further advancing the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We would also like to bring to the Assembly's attention a fundamental shortcoming connected with the principle of regional participation. It is unfortunate that IAEA regional affiliation is not fixed, as a result of which the sovereign rights of Member States are gravely violated by virtue of their exclusion. Allow me to briefly explain this key issue.

As we all know, although the IAEA Statute maintains the principle of sovereign equality of all its member States, that is not the case in practice. Since the Statute does not define the composition of the eight regional areas represented on the Board of Governors, the affiliation of countries in these regional areas is therefore not clearly specified either. IAEA member States are only unofficially divided into regional groups based on geographic representation as in other United Nations system organizations, but without legally defined affiliations.

Furthermore, the IEA Statute does not define the membership affiliation of such newly accepted member States as Kazakhstan, which joined the Agency in 1994, and the Kyrgyz Republic, which joined the Agency in 2003. Therefore, the full-fledged States members of the IAEA outside of the regional areas are groupless and are consequently deprived of their sovereign right to be elected to the governing bodies of the IAEA.

It must be pointed out that there does exist a 1999 amendment to Article VI of the Agency Statute, but it does not address this specific issue. Although the article deals with expanding the number of seats on the Board of Governors, it does not consider the fate of groupless member States. Even after 22 years, the amendment has still not entered into force. In the meantime, the affected member States continue to be denied their rights.

Since the inception of the IAEA, over 20 States are currently groupless, and their number is rising.

Some countries have been waiting patiently for almost 30 years. Therefore, full-fledged IAEA members are being deprived of their legitimate right to participate in the Agency's decision-making process.

The delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic strongly believe that all member States that fulfil their obligations must also be able to exercise their legitimate rights and enjoy the full benefits of IAEA membership. We therefore encourage Director General Grossi to kindly resolve this issue at the earliest so that we can all be equally and fully contributing to the work of the Agency.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by acknowledging Ecuador's gratitude for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its contribution during the pandemic to supporting national and global efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease, in particular by delivering equipment and supplies for virus detection.

I also wish to recognize Canada's work during its term as Chair of the IAEA Board of Governors, which ended in September, and to congratulate the current Chair, the Republic of Korea, on assuming that role.

My Government values and supports the Agency's efforts to ensure the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes and non-proliferation, in line with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, whose Review Conference will be held from 4 to 28 January 2022. This past year, while the Conference was postponed owing to the health situation, Ecuador made a joint statement with Malaysia and 15 other countries on 22 May 2020 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, recalling the effective role of the IAEA in the implementation of the Treaty.

We also recall today the importance of continuing efforts to disarm and eliminate nuclear weapons, as we are deeply concerned about their catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The mere existence of such weapons is a threat to the survival of humankind.

As we now have little more than eight years left to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, I wish to underscore the multifaceted role of the Agency and its contribution to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and other nuclear applications.

A year ago, in this Hall (see A/75/PV.23), I highlighted the work and cooperation of the IAEA and Ecuador, including in efforts relating to the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy and non-destructive testing methods, which are critical for ensuring the structural integrity of buildings, especially after natural disasters. I also highlighted how Ecuador has successfully employed nuclear techniques, with the assistance of the IAEA and in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in order to add non-traditional fruits to its exports by controlling specific insect pests with environmentally friendly methods, such as the sterile insect technique.

Today I would like to highlight the completion by scientists from the IAEA and Ecuador of a decade-long study on the immense scale of microplastic particles that pollute different marine environments. I also recognize the contributions that experts have made in terms of managing irrigation water to enhance crop productivity, as well as the application of, and capacity-building for, the cryogenic distillation technique for extracting soil water, a method used to obtain plant and soil samples for isotopic analysis.

We have been working to enhance our energy demand analysis capabilities by applying the IAEA's Model for Analysis of Energy Demand. I also commend the Agency's continued efforts to drive an increase in the proportion of women working in nuclear science and technology. The wide scope and interdisciplinary nature of the work of the IAEA is important to my country. For those reasons and because of the value that we attach to the Agency, Ecuador continued its co-sponsorship of the draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the IAEA.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my country's full and unwavering support for the work of the IAEA, which it helped to establish, and which is proving to be ever-more crucial to security and development. Moreover, the role of the IAEA is central to ensuring peace, which, as stated in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), is a global public good that we must protect and manage.

Ms. Yee (Singapore): Singapore thanks International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi and the IAEA secretariat for their efforts to continue the Agency's important work in safeguards verification, capacity-building, providing strong support to Member States and advancing scientific and

technical cooperation, despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease.

Over the years, the IAEA's technical competence, professionalism and impartiality have earned it a strong reputation, as well as a high degree of trust from, and a steadfast partnership with, the international community. Singapore reiterates our continued support for the Agency's work. We are pleased to continue to co-sponsor draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the IAEA.

I would like to make four brief points.

First, as the sole competent authority responsible for verifying Member States' fulfilment of their safeguards obligations, the IAEA plays a critical role in advancing the international non-proliferation regime. Through its professionalism, objectivity and continued efforts to develop more robust mechanisms to evaluate safeguards, the IAEA builds trust and international confidence by ensuring that nuclear material and technology are not misused or diverted to non-peaceful uses. Singapore urges all States parties to comply with their obligations under their respective comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency and, where applicable, its additional protocol.

Secondly, the IAEA plays an indispensable role in setting high standards of nuclear safety and security and helping Member States implement those standards. Beyond its country-level evaluation and audit frameworks, the IAEA's global nuclear safety and security network is an effective platform for enhancing international cooperation and dialogue and harmonizing national approaches on that front.

It is also essential for Member States to fulfil their obligations under international legal instruments, such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, in order to enable us to protect our peoples and societies, as well as the environment, while safely harnessing the benefits of nuclear technologies.

Thirdly, Singapore welcomes the IAEA's work on nuclear science and technology transfers through its Technical Cooperation Programme, which plays a critical role in helping developing Member States, particularly least developed countries and small island developing States, to tackle the constantly evolving challenges of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, we welcome the Agency's partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN) through the ASEAN-IAEA practical arrangements, as well as the support the Agency has provided to ASEAN for the safe and secure use of radiation and nuclear technologies.

Fourthly, we welcome the excellent cooperation between the National University of Singapore's Centre for Ion Beam Applications and the IAEA Division of Physical and Chemical Sciences. Singapore also looks forward to deepening our cooperation with the IAEA, especially in the priority areas identified in our country programme framework for the period 2021 to 2025. As we work collectively to build a safer and more secure future for all, Singapore will continue to provide constructive support for the IAEA's activities in its efforts to effectively discharge its mandate.

Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his statement, which reflects the efforts of the Agency to fulfil its objectives, particularly in the context of the global restrictions imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Egypt welcomes the adoption of the report of IAEA (see A/76/232) and of draft resolution A/76/L.10 by consensus, of which Egypt is a co-sponsor in support of its content and objectives, as is the case every year as Egypt is one of the countries that established the Agency. We also value the efforts of South Korea's delegation in introducing the draft resolution in its capacity as Chair of the Agency's Board of Governors.

Egypt has always supported the IAEA's efforts, especially in the areas of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promoting international cooperation, providing technical assistance, and implementing and verifying the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement, as well as implementing nuclear safety and security measures. There has also been notable progress in the cooperation between Egypt and the Agency in the light of Egypt's efforts to establish the El Dabaa nuclear power plant.

In the context of the international tensions that the world faces and the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be held in January 2022, the IAEA has a pivotal role in maintaining the balance among the NPT's three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency also plays an increasingly important role in sustainable development

and in supporting international efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that regard, Egypt emphasizes once again the importance of universalizing the NPT and the comprehensive safeguards agreements of the IAEA as a priority for ensuring the credibility of the international nuclear disarmament system. We also emphasize the importance of maintaining the voluntary nature of the additional protocol, as it is not logical to ask States that have joined the system and are already in compliance to make further commitments when other States remain completely outside that system. It is also important that implementing the safeguard system at the level of the country concerned — the State-level approach — should be not only carried out in consultation with States but also subject to their approval.

Egypt would also like to emphasize the inalienable inherent right of Member States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under article IV of the NPT. We reject any limitations to that right. It is also important that nuclear security measures should not constitute a condition or limitation on the exercise of that right.

Egypt looks forward to seeing further progress in the implementation of the mandate assigned to the IAEA, in accordance with resolutions on applying IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, with a view to achieving progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

My delegation recalls the success in 2019 of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was presided over by the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The second session of the Conference, to be presided over by the sisterly State of Kuwait, will be held from 29 November to 3 December. Egypt looks forward to the IAEA's participation in the second session of the Conference in its capacity as an observer and the positive contribution it will bring to its substantive discussions and the achievement of its objectives.

Mr. Asokan (India): Today's debate is an occasion to reflect upon the crucial role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in supporting Member States in their pursuit of nuclear power in a safe and secure manner and providing them with technical assistance.

India supports the adoption by consensus of the report of IAEA (see A/76/232), which remains an important document for enabling Member States and other stakeholders to understand the work of the Agency. We thank the Republic of Korea for introducing draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of IAEA, which we co-sponsored, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus. We congratulate Saint Kitts and Nevis for joining the IAEA. We also welcome the appointment of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India as External Auditor of the Agency for the period 2022 to 2027.

The IAEA plays a critical role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for sustainable development and prosperity. A few weeks ago, world leaders gathered in Glasgow to discuss the challenges posed by climate change and ways to address them. It is becoming increasingly clear that nuclear energy could play an important role for Member States to meet their energy needs in a sustainable way.

Therefore, the IAEA's continued support for Member States embarking on or expanding their nuclear energy programmes is vital. For its part, India has made considerable progress in augmenting its nuclear power capacity. India's first indigenously developed 700-megawatt pressurized heavy water reactor was successfully synchronized with its grid in January. Another 10 of those water reactors are expected to be set up in fleet mode. They form an important component of our commitment to increasing India's non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030.

India attaches great importance to the Agency's work in the area of nuclear science, especially with respect to its application in various sectors such as agriculture, health and the environment. Our contribution to the renovation of the Agency's Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf reflects that. India, too, has made significant strides in the field of nuclear applications. For example, one of our national institutes has initiated the use of chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy, which has brought down the cost of cancer treatment from \$500,000 to just \$30,000.

The IAEA's work in helping Member States deal with the coronavirus disease pandemic is commendable. Its Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project, which will better prepare countries to deal with future pandemics, is a testament to the forward-looking work of the Agency. We appreciate the support extended to Member States by the Agency for capacity-building. India has

contributed to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme by seconding experts and offering training slots in our reputed national institutions for experts from other Member States. We will continue to provide that support to the Agency's programmes.

India has also supported the research and development activities of the IAEA by participating in and hosting technical meetings and coordinating research projects. In partnership with the IAEA, we hosted a meeting on strategies and opportunities for the management of spent fuel from power reactors, as well as a training workshop on national infrastructure assessments to support new research reactor projects held in 2020.

India is registered with the IAEA's Response and Assistance Network, which offers assistance to Member States to mitigate the consequences of nuclear and radiological emergencies. India's emergency preparedness and response capabilities are now available to all partner countries during an emergency, which is a reflection of our commitment to strengthening the international framework and cooperation in that domain.

India has made enormous progress in the utilization of radiation technologies for the common good of its people. In the spirit of our own philosophy of "The World is One Family", we have been sharing our knowledge and expertise in that area through the IAEA. India has also been enhancing its cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with other Member States, including on applications of nuclear technologies that can make a positive impact on the quality of human life.

Let me conclude by affirming my appreciation for the dynamic role played by the IAEA in guiding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and ensuring nuclear safety and security. We look forward to the IAEA's continued support for Member States in fostering an environment that is conducive to advancing nuclear energy, science and technology.

Mrs. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, I would like to thank Director General Rafael Grossi for his briefing on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232). We commend the Agency's efforts to assist countries and provide them with technical support in the peaceful use of nuclear technologies in various fields, from energy and health care to food and agriculture.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt), Vice-President, took the Chair.

For many countries in the world today, investing in the development of nuclear technology is the key to strengthening energy independence, food security and national economic growth and improving the well-being of populations. We welcome the new flagship initiatives of the IAEA to use nuclear technologies to combat zoonotic infectious diseases and plastic pollution.

We view nuclear energy as a low-carbon source of electricity. If we do not opt to use it for that purpose now and in the foreseeable future, it will be impossible to ensure the sustainable development of the world economy and the adoption of effective measures to combat climate change.

This year Belarus began the final stages of the construction of its first nuclear power plant. The first unit of the power plant became operational in June, and the second unit is planned to be operational in 2022. Our experience demonstrates the concrete, practical benefits that IAEA tools and services offer to support countries that are developing nuclear energy.

Belarus is taking the necessary measures to ensure the highest degree of safety at its power plants in an open and responsible manner, in cooperation with all interested partners, primarily the IAEA. "Safety above all" has actually become the motto of Belarus' nuclear power plant. Belarus has completed all of the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review missions required for countries to develop their first nuclear power plants.

The recommendations and suggestions of experts serve as important guidelines for Belarus in the implementation of its national nuclear energy programme. Belarus openly shares that experience, as well as the achievements of our national nuclear science programme, with other States.

Belarus is a staunch and consistent supporter of strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and strictly complies with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the NPT Safeguards Agreement. We express our support for the Agency's activities in implementing safeguards, which must be done only based on mutually agreed approaches and in strict compliance with the relevant international treaties.

Belarus fully supports the activities of the IAEA and is pleased to be a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the IAEA.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this debate on the relationship between the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the report of IAEA (see A/76/232) and the indispensable role it plays in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Draft resolution A/76/L.10, which the General Assembly will take action on today and which was introduced by the representative of the Republic of Korea and co-sponsored by Mexico, demonstrates the international community's recognition of the outstanding work of this important Agency.

Mexico takes note of the report of the Agency on its activities in 2020. My country is very proud of Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi's outstanding leadership of the Agency as the first Director General from the Latin American and Caribbean region to hold that position. We congratulate him on his achievements.

First of all, Mexico wishes to emphasize the ongoing work of the IAEA to address the health emergency caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic by providing support to Member States in the form of tests and equipment for detecting and diagnosing COVID-19 and adopting measures to enable the Agency's inspectors to continue their safeguards verification activities. The Agency's verification activities to prevent the misuse of nuclear material have undoubtedly been a key factor in consolidating the authority of the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The activities of the Agency in finalizing, bringing into force and promoting safeguards agreements and additional protocols, as well as ensuring information security, cooperation with national and regional authorities, quality control and reporting on the implementation on safeguards and further developing the safeguards system, are guarantees of international security.

In that context, Mexico applauds the Agency's efforts to contribute to safeguarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council, plus Germany. The IAEA plays a central role in monitoring the JCPOA, as well as in reporting on nuclear security

in the Middle East and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The IAEA's most essential work includes its provision of international safeguards and cooperation to prevent the misuse of nuclear technology, facilities, equipment and radioactive materials, as well as its promotion of nuclear safety, including through radiation protection standards.

We also applaud the IAEA's efforts to encourage an increase in the proportion of women involved in the various activities of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme and to make the gender perspective a cross-cutting issue in developing its cooperation projects. In that vein, we are pleased to see that the IAEA has prioritized gender parity at the Agency's senior and managerial levels.

Through its Departments of Technical Cooperation, Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Sciences and Applications, the IAEA strongly promotes the uses of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, in support of sustainable human development. It also facilitates technology transfers to developing countries. The Technical Cooperation Programme has benefited several States, primarily in the areas of health and nutrition, food and agriculture, and safety and security.

We reiterate the need to continue fostering partnerships and synergies among the Agency, its member States, the various agencies of the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society in order to ensure the continued contributions of nuclear science and technology to sustainable human development.

One such example welcomed by Mexico is the IAEA Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) project, which uses nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques and which we believe is one of the most important and timely global initiatives to improve the preparedness of responses to emerging infectious diseases. It is commendable that more than 140 countries currently participate in that project, and the IAEA has already initiated capacity-building and equipment procurement activities to establish a network of ZODIAC national laboratories in several countries.

Turning to environmental matters, the role of nuclear techniques to support climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, specifically in climate-smart agriculture and ensuring the sustainable use of land, water and the environment, was highlighted at the

United Nations Climate Change Conference recently held in Glasgow.

The IAEA also assists States in applying nuclear science and technology to monitor greenhouse-gas emissions and changes in the biosphere, oceans and ecosystems, as well as to mitigate sources of greenhouse-gas emissions arising from energy production. All those activities exemplify the important work of the IAEA, an Agency that we must continue to strengthen and support.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Algeria, it is my pleasure to express to the President of the General Assembly my wholehearted thanks and appreciation for convening this meeting, and to congratulate him on his wise stewardship of this session.

I would also like to welcome Ambassador Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to thank him for introducing the annual report of the IAEA (see A/76/232).

Algeria supports the adoption by consensus today of draft resolution A/76/L.10 on the report of the IAEA, which my country co-sponsored. We also appreciate the efforts of the IAEA secretariat in preparing its annual report, which covers a wide range of the activities of the Agency and its achievements in the main areas of nuclear technology, technical cooperation, nuclear safety and security, as well as safeguards. This annual debate constitutes an opportunity to review the progress made by the IAEA over the past year and consider promoting international cooperation to enable the Agency to fulfil its fundamental objective, namely, to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Algeria attaches great importance to the activities of the IAEA in the areas of peaceful uses of atomic energy, the promotion of international cooperation, technical assistance, safeguards, verification, and nuclear safety and security. Algeria actively contributes to supporting the efforts of the IAEA and the activities of its secretariat in all those areas and addressing issues related to nuclear security at the regional and international levels. Algeria's two nuclear research reactors were subjected to the Agency's safeguards pursuant to the safeguards agreement concluded in 1996.

We are committed to the IAEA's mandate and call for attaching the utmost importance to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by enhancing

cooperation programmes at the national and regional levels. In that regard, Algeria commends the ongoing efforts of the IAEA to promote nuclear safety and security, as well as the technical assistance provided to developing countries in building their skills, enhancing infrastructure and ensuring the physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials. We call once again for efforts to be redoubled to provide the funding and resources necessary for the Agency to discharge the desired technical cooperation aspect of its mandate.

Algeria stresses the inherent and inalienable right of States to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In addition, Algeria opposes the restriction of that right under any pretext, especially with regard to nuclear safety and security.

Algeria also stresses its principled and unwavering position that a given territory or State should fundamentally assume the primary responsibility for its own nuclear safety and security. Measures to promote nuclear safety and security should not hinder international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy or limit the priorities of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme.

In that vein, Algeria once again stresses the importance of the safeguards regime of the IAEA as the optimal legal framework for ensuring the full compliance of non-proliferation commitments and the most credible and effective means of ensuring the compliance of all nuclear facilities and activities with the provisions of the NPT. Algeria considers the verification system of the IAEA to be an essential component of the multilateral system of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation with its global nature.

Algeria also underlines the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme, which it helps the Agency to maintain with a view to promoting capabilities based on national needs and priorities. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its gratitude to the Department of Technical Cooperation of the IAEA for its tireless efforts to ensure the effective and continuous implementation of the projects of that programme, despite the various difficulties imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

At the regional level, my country's delegation is satisfied with the priority that the IAEA accords to the African continent in a number of vital areas, such as

nutrition, agriculture, health care, developing nuclear knowledge and management, safety, security, water, the environment, energy and nuclear technology, especially through the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA), which provides a significant contribution to the sustainability and promotion of regional cooperation.

Algeria believes that AFRA should be extended indefinitely. In the context of activating AFRA, the Algerian authorities seek to effectively implement its programmes, especially through the three regional centres included in the Agreement in the areas of training for protection against nuclear radiation, as well as nuclear medicine and food safety.

We also strongly support the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) plan of action and call for enhanced cooperation between Algeria, the IAEA and AFRA on the development of a number of programmes, including those related to nuclear safety and security safeguards and building the national capacities of African States parties to the Pelindaba Treaty.

In that regard, my country's delegation is pleased to announce that Algeria hosts two of the AFCONE regional collaborating centres — the first relates to nuclear safeguards and the second to nuclear safety and security — which demonstrates Algeria's commitment to supporting efforts to enhance cooperation among States and its readiness to provide its expertise and national infrastructure for the benefit of Africa.

With regard to the issue of guaranteeing nuclear security at the national level, Algeria recalls that all international provisions related to nuclear safety, including the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, to which Algeria is a party, have been mainstreamed in national legislation.

In December 2017, Algeria also signed its third country programme framework for the period 2018-2023, which is our frame of reference for the medium-term planning of technical cooperation between Algeria and the IAEA. It identifies the areas for nuclear technological transfer and technical cooperation to support our national objectives in key priority areas such as radiation safety, food and agriculture, health and nutrition, water and environment, as well as energy and industry.

Given the special importance that Algeria attaches to the risks related to new threats, including radioactive material, my country developed a national plan for the implementation of all provisions relative to nuclear security, in accordance with the Agency's Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan, which we also endorsed.

Algeria is currently working on technical and regulatory updates of the nuclear and radioactive emergency plan and building its capacities in nuclear security, especially by training people who work in that area. We also acknowledge that it is the responsibility of States to maintain their nuclear security. Algeria has made great progress on promoting its relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks, particularly in terms of the criminalizing the malicious use of radioactive materials and nuclear terrorist attacks through its July 2019 legislation, which includes a number of provisions related to the establishment of a national authority for nuclear safety and security that entered into force in April.

I would like to acknowledge Algeria's continued commitment to fulfilling the various recommendations contained in the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, through enhancing regulatory oversight on the borders in coordination with relevant national institutions.

As we approach the tenth NPT Review Conference, scheduled to be held in January 2022, Algeria calls on all States parties to the Treaty to demonstrate the necessary political will to reach fruitful consensual recommendations that promote the balance among the three pillars of the NPT, especially the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

My country's delegation would like to thank the IAEA for its contribution to and participation in the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was held in 2019.

We also look forward to the Agency's contribution to the second session of the Conference, to be held from 29 November to 3 December.

In conclusion, Algeria reiterates its full support for the mandate and activities of the IAEA, especially those aimed at promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Imbert (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): As we approach the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the nuclear issue has become the focus of our discussions more than ever. The NPT is, and must remain, the backbone of disarmament and the peaceful use of the atom.

Nuclear energy has many applications and contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. And it becomes all the more essential if we want to quickly reconcile energy demand, development and the fight against climate change. No solution is perfect, but science, technology and innovation have shown that it is possible to achieve extraordinary feats in record time. The progress that has been made on the issues of nuclear waste and the development of small modular reactors have opened up promising opportunities.

As we consider the sixty-fifth annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232), I would like to commend the work of the Agency, which, despite the pandemic, successfully adapted and continued to fulfil its mandate in terms of security, safety and verification, as well as in technical, scientific, legal and training-based cooperation. Such cooperation is now crucial for dealing with new threats, particularly in the realm of cybersecurity. While providing support to countries to help them confront the coronavirus disease pandemic will remain the Agency's most far-reaching technical cooperation project, some of its other recent initiatives also deserve to be highlighted.

I would like to take note of the IAEA's development of a technique to distinguish artificially produced soil erosion from naturally occurring soil erosion; its publication of an assessment report that draws on pollution trends in certain coastal environments that have emerged over the past century; and its spearheading of the IAEA Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project. In the context of efforts to drive an increase in the proportion of women in the nuclear sector, we welcome its launch of the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

The Principality of Monaco supports more than ever the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its benefits for the environment and human health, as in the case of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy.

As a French-speaking country, my country is of course intent on upholding the multilingualism of the Agency, which factors into our effectiveness if we want to reach the widest possible audience and is needed to counter the scourge of misinformation that permeates our societies.

The visit to Monaco in September of Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA, for the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the IAEA Environment Laboratories was an opportunity for Monaco's authorities to reiterate their commitment to pursuing the Agency's work on ocean acidification, the degradation of marine ecosystems, the mitigation of anthropogenic consequences and the study of the accumulation and impact of plastic particles in the marine environment.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the Principality's full commitment to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his report (see A/76/232).

The peaceful use of nuclear energy plays a significant role in the scientific, technological and socioeconomic advancement of developing countries. Nuclear knowledge-sharing and technology transfer to interested developing countries, as envisioned in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in the IAEA Statute, are critical in that context. The IAEA Statute specifies that the Agency is responsible for assisting its member States in research into, and the development and practical application of, nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Iran underscores that safeguards related to verification activities should be implemented in support of the Agency's primary responsibility for promoting the application of nuclear science and technology. In that context, we emphasize that the design and implementation of required safeguards must comply with the inalienable rights of NPT States parties, without hampering their economic or technological development.

Efforts to enhance the implementation of safeguards need to ensure that those inalienable rights and the national sovereignty of NPT States parties are respected. Spurious concerns related to nuclear proliferation should not in any way be used as an excuse to restrict those legitimate rights. We reject

the systematic attempts, applied under the pretext of promoting non-proliferation and contrary to the letter and spirit of the Treaty, to deny or limit the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The unlawful withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, the reimposition of illegal sanctions against Iran and the significant non-performance by the United States of its obligations under the JCPOA and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) have effectively prevented the Islamic Republic of Iran from enjoying its rights enshrined in that resolution.

The indisputable reality is that, until now, Iran has performed its obligations under the JCPOA, whereas the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany have violated their JCPOA commitments. Iran will fully implement the JCPOA if the other parties effectively implement all their obligations under the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015), lift all unlawful sanctions in a verifiable manner and ensure that they will not violate the JCPOA obligations again.

The Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran are working closely with one other in different fields. Iran has the best track record in receiving IAEA inspectors and cooperating with the Agency. The Agency has been able to carry out its verification activities in Iran effectively despite the challenging environment created by the coronavirus outbreak. As the Agency has verified and confirmed on numerous occasions, including in the Director General's report, there are no safeguards issues associated with Iran's ongoing nuclear activities.

Iran is dedicated to fulfilling its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. It is important to stress that all nuclear material and facilities in Iran are subject to the Agency's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and there is no evidence of diversion of declared nuclear material or activities in Iran. However, the Agency's impartiality, independence and professionalism should never be jeopardized in the context of the safeguards obligations.

Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities have been under attacks of sabotage, and our nuclear scientists have been the targets of assassination attempts by the Zionist regime. The assassination of Mr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, on 27 November 2020, continued a pattern of terrorist acts that began over a decade ago with the assassinations of several Iranian nuclear scientists in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The international community and the relevant international organizations, in particular the United Nations, must unequivocally condemn those heinous terrorist acts. The Israeli regime continues to be a non-party to the NPT. It has consistently and vehemently refused to join the NPT and refused to comply with IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. The Agency must take an unbiased and professional approach to dealing with that regime.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to clarify its position on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232), which contains information that makes accusations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in an unjust manner.

Every year, the IAEA submits an annual report to the General Assembly that contains inappropriate information regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a non-member State of the Agency. Meanwhile, those reports do not come close to mentioning even a single word about the hostile policy of the United States and its nuclear threats aimed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which are the cause of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. That clearly shows that the United States and its followers are manipulating the IAEA for their sinister political purposes, leaving it bereft of the impartiality and objectivity that international organizations fundamentally require.

It was none other than the United States and its follower, the IAEA, that raised suspicions about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's peaceful nuclear facilities in the early 1990s, leaving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with no option but to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the IAEA.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has never acknowledged the report or the resolutions on the report of the IAEA, which echo the stereotypical smear words of forces hostile to our republic. Accordingly, we categorically reject those documents. We have nothing to do with the NPT and the IAEA, and therefore we see no reason to implement the comprehensive safeguards agreement. The IAEA has no justification or qualification to make claims regarding verifications or supervision in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, because we are not a member State of the Agency.

We will never deal with the IAEA as long as it plays up to the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and continues to release circular reports that distort the nature of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232) and the efforts of the Agency and its Director General, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, particularly in the wake of the devastating effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The IAEA's report for 2020 is an important compendium of its activities in developing and transferring nuclear technologies for peaceful applications, enhancing nuclear safety and security, and strengthening nuclear verification and non-proliferation efforts. The IAEA's successful delivery of the largest technical cooperation project, in terms of both the number of beneficiary countries and the disbursement of resources to help countries confront COVID-19, is commendable.

As a founding member of the IAEA, Pakistan ardently supports the Agency's role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with its motto, "Atoms for peace and development". Pakistan continues to harness nuclear technology for socioeconomic progress and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Nuclear technologies and applications are being used today in Pakistan in such diverse areas as power generation, health, agriculture, industry and environmental protection. We view nuclear energy as a reliable, consistent and carbon-free source of electricity generation. Our efforts to expand nuclear power generation and increase its share in the national energy mix are driven by the fact that we are not only an energy-deficient country but also one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change.

Pakistan achieved another milestone this year by inaugurating its sixth and largest nuclear power plant, the 1,100-megawatt Karachi Nuclear Power Plant K-2. We appreciate the congratulatory message from the Director General of the IAEA on that accomplishment. Another such power plant, K-3, is expected to become operational in April 2022.

Pakistan has been one of the leading partners of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme for a

number of years. At present, a project in the field of nuclear power development is being implemented successfully, while three additional projects in the areas of agriculture, human health and nuclear power have been designed for the Programme's 2022 to 2023 cycle.

The IAEA's role as the world's focal point for the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy has assumed greater significance in view of the fast-growing global energy demand and the diverse challenges of climate and proliferation. The IAEA can make a significant contribution to meeting the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century by ensuring equitable access to nuclear materials, technology and equipment for peaceful purposes.

Pakistan's commitment to complying with the IAEA Safeguards Agreement is demonstrated by the fact that we have placed all our nuclear power plants and research reactors, without exception, under IAEA safeguards. During the most challenging days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the uninterrupted implementation of safeguards was ensured.

Considering nuclear safety and security as a national responsibility, Pakistan has developed a comprehensive nuclear safety and security regime that is regularly reviewed and updated in line with the IAEA's guidance documents and international best practices. The regime is based on an extensive legislative and regulatory framework governing the security of nuclear materials, radioactive substances, associated facilities and activities. That is backed by strong institutions and organizations with the requisite authorities, resources and trained personnel required for its effective implementation. Our affiliated institutes at the centre of excellence on nuclear security have transformed into an international hub for imparting training and sharing best practices in the area of nuclear security.

Safety and verification aspects remain important pillars of the IAEA's mandate. With regard to the strengthening of the safeguards system, Pakistan stresses the need for a balanced approach between the promotional aspects and safety- or security-related concerns in all the Agency's functions. We share the view that all States should fully comply with their respective safeguards obligations.

At the same time, the Agency's safeguards should not be used to serve partisan political objectives. Its verification regime will remain credible only if it is applied on a non-discriminatory basis, as stipulated in the

IAEA Statute. Cooperation and greater understanding are required from and among all the member States of the Agency in order to advance its mandate on the basis of impartiality, equity and professionalism.

Recent developments have revealed that the old consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation has broken down. In that regard, Pakistan has proposed the convening a special session of the General Assembly to evolve a new consensus that responds to the current and emerging realities and offers equal security to all States, both large and small.

That new consensus should eliminate the discrimination and double standards that categorize the current non-proliferation arrangements. It should also evolve an agreed basis for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate international safeguards, in accordance with the international obligations of States and on a non-discriminatory basis.

Mr. Lagardien (South Africa): We welcome today's debate on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/76/232), which covers a period when the world was experiencing the full extent of the impact and restrictions brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, for his presentation of the 2020 IAEA report and for providing valuable updates on the Agency's 2021 activities. In that regard, we would like to make three broad points in relation to the IAEA's work — on global health, development and its efforts in support of gender equality.

First, at this time and during the reporting period, it is important to emphasize the fundamental role that the IAEA has played throughout the pandemic and in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for global health and development. Projects such as the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Network, for example, showed considerable growth during the reporting period, illustrating the value of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques in tackling socioeconomic and public health challenges.

We also recognize that the Agency's rapid response to Member State requests for COVID-19-related assistance through the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Network delivery mechanism has shown how the Agency's collaboration with Member States can harness the peaceful uses of the atom in protecting

and advancing humankind and assisting in confronting emerging challenges.

South Africa welcomes the fact that 128 countries and territories have received COVID-19-related support and assistance, while more than 1,950 consignments of equipment and supplies for detecting and diagnosing COVID-19 have been delivered. Indeed, South Africa was a grateful recipient of such support.

We also appreciate the Agency's Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project, which was launched in 2020 and draws on the Agency's experience in supporting Member States to use nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques to enhance global response and preparedness to combat zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19.

Secondly, South Africa reaffirms its strong support for the IAEA's work in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which contributes to development through the use of science and technology, as well as for its Technical Cooperation Programme. We note that there has been a significant increase in Member States' requests for support from the Agency in that important area, through which it addresses socioeconomic development and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

That has played a particularly positive role on the African continent. A key area of growth on the continent is nuclear energy, where we have noted the support given by the IAEA to several African countries that have decided to embark on a path to introduce nuclear energy.

In South Africa, we also continue to benefit from the support provided by the IAEA. The promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful uses in all aspects of life is vital for progress and development. In that regard, South Africa remains committed to strengthening its participation and programmes with the Agency, and we are proud that the iThemba Labs — Africa's leading research facility for accelerator-based science and host of the largest accelerator facility in the southern hemisphere — recently became an IAEA collaborating centre.

We are also pleased to note that the Director General's call for nuclear energy to be part of the energy mix in response to climate change was generally well received at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held recently in Glasgow. Nuclear power applications, in particular nuclear energy, is

a key feature in South Africa's 20-year electricity generation plan.

We therefore welcome the IAEA's assistance to Member States in applying international safety standards to strengthen nuclear power plant safety. In addition, South Africa remains committed to the continued safe operation of Africa's only commercial nuclear power plant, Koeberg. In that regard, a mission to South Africa on the safety aspects of long-term operation is scheduled for January 2022, and we look forward to welcoming the IAEA delegation in that regard.

Thirdly, gender mainstreaming remains a priority for South Africa, and we welcome that the percentage of professional women in the Agency's regular staff is now at its highest level in IAEA history, at 35 per cent. We further welcome the significant progress on gender representation at senior grade levels in the Agency. However, we are aware that more needs to be done, and we therefore appreciate the Director General prioritizing gender parity at the IAEA, with the aim of reaching 50 per cent composition of women in posts at the P-4 level and above by 2025.

South Africa has dedicated 2021 to commemorating the memory of the pioneer and freedom stalwart Charlotte Maxeke, who proved that women and young people play a vital leadership role, including in the scientific fields, even in the most difficult of circumstances. South Africa is therefore deeply committed to honouring her memory by redoubling its own efforts at gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women and young people in science.

For that reason, we are encouraged that the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme has shown the Agency's dedication to supporting young women from all regions, with the aim of increasing the number of women in the nuclear field and building an inclusive and geographically diverse workforce. Young, smart and underprivileged South African women are beneficiaries of the 2020 Fellowship Programme, and South Africa thanks the Member States that have made extrabudgetary contributions to the Programme.

It is vital for us to recognize today the work of the IAEA, not only in terms of its mandate of strengthening nuclear verification and non-proliferation but also in helping to confront global health challenges and as a key contributor to global developmental efforts. We are therefore appreciative of the IAEA's role in that regard

and look forward to its continued valuable contribution to advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, development and gender equality.

Mr. Dandy (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Syrian Arab Republic attaches importance to the implementation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its mandate in accordance with its Statute. My country, Syria, acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1969, long before many European Union (EU) countries that today claim to be committed to the non-proliferation regime. In 1992, my country also signed a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the Agency and has always supported the rights of all Member States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Israeli aggression that targeted a building in the Syrian governorate of Deir ez-Zor in September 2007 was a violation of our sovereignty as well as a flagrant breach of international law. Instead of condemning that aggression unequivocally, it was used to promote false allegations against Syria in order to tarnish its image and bring political pressure to bear on my country. In that regard, I would like to point out the following.

First, the Statute of the IAEA compels the United States of America to notify the Agency and share the information that it had before the building was destroyed, rather than eight months after it was destroyed by Israel. The same applies to Israel, which neglected to provide the Agency with the information it had and carried out an unjust act of military aggression against the sovereignty of Syrian territory.

Secondly, Israel's official acknowledgement of responsibility for that aggression requires it to cooperate with the Agency in order to identify the pollution that was caused by the bombs it used in its aggression. Unless Israel, the aggressor, cooperates with the Agency, any discussions on this issue will be in vain.

Thirdly, most of the Agency's conclusions regarding the building in Deir ez-Zor were based on images and analysis provided by the American Central Intelligence Agency. That is something that raises many questions about the credibility of the information received, particularly as we recall the United States-British aggression against Iraq based on a misleading dossier on alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Fourthly, the Syrian Arab Republic has cooperated positively and constructively with the Agency. In June

2008 we authorized the Agency's team to visit the destroyed site in Deir ez-Zor and collect samples from it. We also reached an agreement on an action plan with the Agency in October 2011 in order to resolve all outstanding issues. However, pressure from certain Member States hindered those efforts.

The United States as well as many EU member countries are still violating their obligations under the NPT by providing protection to Israel and keeping its nuclear programme outside of any international oversight. They are even strengthening cooperation with Israel so that it can develop its military nuclear capabilities, in particular by providing it with the expertise, materials and technology necessary for the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons.

Israel's aggressive behaviour in the region while keeping its nuclear capabilities outside the framework of the NPT and the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency represents a major danger to the non-proliferation regime. Moreover, Israel rejects all initiatives calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and refuses to subject all its nuclear facilities to the Agency safeguards. That constitutes a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. We cannot remain silent on that issue. We must put an end to it.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates that cooperation between Syria and the Agency has never stopped, and relevant reports regarding safeguards implementation show that Syria has always met its legal obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We have responded favourably and on time to all requests for periodic inspections despite the complications of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the difficult conditions that we have experienced in the past 10 years as a result of the hostile policies of some States against us.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine welcomes the annual report (see A/76/232) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the year 2020, which provides an overview of the Agency's activities during what has probably been the most challenging year in its history. It is of the utmost importance that the current annual report and all future annual reports remain in full compliance with the norms of international law, the IAEA Statute and the respective safeguards agreements.

We applaud the IAEA secretariat for its excellent adaptation to the emerging and unpredictable circumstances, in terms of both reorganizing the work of its personnel and continuing to carry out its mandatory functions. A noteworthy example in that regard is the largest technical cooperation project in the Agency's history, which was successfully delivered by the IAEA in response to the global coronavirus disease pandemic.

In addition, despite the challenges caused by the constraints of lockdowns and disrupted international transport, the IAEA demonstrated a remarkable sustainability in implementing the safeguards and other verification activities in 2020. We commend the Agency for conducting almost the same level of verification activities in 2020 as in the previous year.

We also acknowledge the continued progress shown in enhancing information-sharing capabilities — including by using social media and other public communication mechanisms, upgrading review and advisory services and updating online tools for the collection and evaluation of nuclear-related information, which is absolutely essential in remote-working conditions.

With regard to the Ukraine-IAEA Safeguards Agreement, I would like to make the following remarks. The IAEA was not able to draw broader conclusions for Ukraine for 2020. The ongoing temporary occupation by Russia of an integral part of Ukraine — the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions — is the sole reason that prevented the IAEA from drawing broader conclusions for Ukraine for the past year.

Unlike the comprehensive, transparent and verifiable implementation of safeguards in the territories controlled by the Government of Ukraine, the IAEA was not able to access the nuclear material located in the temporarily occupied territories during the past year. That notwithstanding, Ukraine continues to fully comply with its nuclear-related obligations and to strengthen its non-proliferation track record even more diligently than ever before. The decision of the IAEA not to draw broader conclusions for Ukraine for 2020 has nothing to do with any proliferation concern in the whole territory of Ukraine or with any questions concerning the implementation of safeguards on the territories controlled by the Government of Ukraine.

I would like to stress that it is an exceptional and unprecedented situation when one Member State

prevents the Agency from fulfilling its statutory mandate on the territory of another Member State. That is a pressing problem that should be properly and promptly addressed within the IAEA framework. Most important, such illegal actions on the part of Russia undermine the effectiveness of the safeguards mechanism and bring into question the ability of the IAEA to provide comprehensive conclusions. Ukraine is greatly concerned that the absence of a timely reaction by the international community to such actions could jeopardize the credibility of the Agency's assurances related to safeguards.

I must also mention today that Ukraine, as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a non-nuclear-weapon State, is gravely concerned that the Russian Federation deploys in Crimea carriers and other means of delivery of nuclear weapons. The occupying Power has also seized the former nuclear-weapon storage sites located in Crimea. All those actions clearly jeopardize the NPT regime and present a serious threat to regional and global security and stability, which must be properly addressed by the international community.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Ukraine's continued full backing of the work of the IAEA and its important role in support of international peace and security.

Mr. Natarajan (Malaysia): At the outset, Malaysia wishes to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the presentation of its annual report (see A/76/232).

Malaysia commends the Agency's activities in the various areas highlighted in the report, despite the challenging circumstances caused by the pandemic. In particular, we commend the Agency's continued commitment to strengthening IAEA safety standards and assisting States in their efforts to establish comprehensive national nuclear security regimes through capacity-building, human resource development and other forms of assistance.

As a current member of the Agency's Board of Governors, Malaysia will continue to support the Agency's essential role in facilitating access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology for States, while ensuring that the highest level of nuclear safety, security and safeguards are observed.

Malaysia is also proud to have received the awards for outstanding achievement from the IAEA and the Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations last September for our effort in applying radiation mutation breeding to increase the nation's self-sufficiency level and food security. In that connection, we stand ready to extend our support and cooperation to the Agency and States in any initiatives and activities towards our mutual goals and interests.

Malaysia strongly believes in the balanced and effective implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT): nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, Malaysia recognizes the indispensable role of the IAEA in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology as the sole competent authority mandated to verify the compliance of States towards their safeguards obligations.

Malaysia has always considered the NPT as the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We hope that all States parties will utilize the tenth NPT Review Conference to reaffirm and implement past objectives and commitments while reinvigorating the process moving forward. We also welcome the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to further the goals of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its continued support of the Agency's mandated role to promote the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear technology and is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the Agency.

Mr. Osuga (Japan): I would like to begin by expressing my highest respect for Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his strong leadership in guiding the IAEA to exercise its full authority.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy constitute an important pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and contribute to socioeconomic development worldwide, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Japan continues to provide human resources as well as technical and financial support to the IAEA, including through its contributions to the Peaceful Uses Initiative and technical cooperation projects. In the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic, Japan has in

addition contributed a total of €11 million to support the IAEA's countermeasures against infectious diseases.

By seeking gender parity, we can add new insights and wisdom to the important agenda of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. In order to create opportunities for more female scientists in the nuclear field, Japan has supported the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme since its launch and will continue to do so.

This year marked the tenth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident. Japan is grateful that last week the IAEA successfully hosted the International Conference on a Decade of Progress after Fukushima-Daiichi: Building on the Lessons Learned to Further Strengthen Nuclear Safety.

The decommissioning of that power station is progressing on the principles of achieving both reconstruction and decommissioning, and IAEA reviews have been conducted throughout the entire process. Japan will continue to update the international community in a transparent manner based on scientific evidence and will continue to cooperate with the IAEA — as mentioned by Director General Grossi in his opening remarks — in implementing the Agency's reviews.

The role of the IAEA is critically important in addressing the key problems faced by the international non-proliferation regime. IAEA safeguards are the most fundamental instrument for the regime, and Japan strongly supports the IAEA's work to make those safeguards more efficient and effective.

Concerning nuclear security, Japan will also continue to cooperate with the IAEA. As no single nation can ensure global nuclear security, Japan underscores the important role of legal frameworks such as the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Japan continues to strive to make those conventions more universal, including through its contributions to the 2022 Review Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Allow me to touch on some of the most pressing issues that the international non-proliferation regime faces today.

On North Korea's nuclear issue, Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's continued development of nuclear and missile capabilities, as demonstrated by its recent missile launches and also highlighted in the IAEA Director General's report on the application of safeguards in that country issued in August.

Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programmes and related facilities, as well as ballistic missiles of all ranges, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Japan also emphasizes the critical importance of all States fully implementing those resolutions.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) contributes to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and the stability of the Middle East. Japan hopes to see progress towards the immediate return of all relevant parties to compliance under the JCPOA. Japan strongly urges Iran to refrain from measures that undermine the agreement and to cooperate fully and immediately with the IAEA on safeguards issues.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The tenth NPT Review Conference is scheduled to be held very soon. Japan will spare no effort to achieve a successful outcome that will maintain and strengthen the NPT regime. Japan expects the IAEA to play an even more important role to that end.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Japan's firm commitment to continuing to provide its full support to the IAEA to further promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our appreciation for the presentation of the 2020 annual report (see A/76/232) of the International Atomic Energy Agency and draft resolution A/76/L.10. We recognize and support the important work of the IAEA and its contribution to peace and sustainable development.

We acknowledge in particular the support provided by the Agency to its member States in tackling the coronavirus disease pandemic. We appreciate those efforts, which in the case of Cuba contributed to strengthening the network of molecular biology

laboratories in all the country's provinces with highly qualified personnel.

Cuba is proud to have held the office of Secretary of the Steering Group of the Technical Coordination Body of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean since the middle of this year.

We confirm our commitment to continue working to strengthen cooperation efforts, create new alliances and develop nuclear applications for peaceful use in our region, especially for the benefit of priority areas such as health, food safety, environmental protection and the management of water resources. It is necessary to redouble the efforts of the Agency to increase the resources of the Technical Cooperation Programme with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The implementation of the IAEA safeguards verification system is essential for the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including the verification of the peaceful nature of nuclear energy programmes. We underscore that it is essential to continue to ensure the impartial and professional conduct of the IAEA secretariat in order to maintain the credibility of the Agency's safeguard activities. The IAEA is the framework for the adoption of international standards on nuclear security, which must be the result of transparent and inclusive multilateral negotiations that include the participation of all States.

We remain convinced that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination in an irreversible, transparent and verified manner. We support the holding of the Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East.

At the same time, we reaffirm our support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran and our rejection of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the agreement.

We will continue to support the inalienable right of States to develop the research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination or conditions.

Finally, we advocate an immediate end to unilateral coercive measures that impose restrictions on the export to developing countries of materials, equipment and technologies for peaceful nuclear activities.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU). I would like to underline a few other points in my national capacity.

This year the world commemorates 35 years since the Chernobyl accident and 10 years since the Fukushima accident. At the same time, about 30 countries in the world are considering, planning or starting nuclear power programmes, and about 20 countries have at some point expressed an interest in doing so. That gives us a clear view that nuclear power will remain extremely important in the global energy mix despite the potential risks that come with it. With that in mind, we have to ensure that nuclear safety is the top priority of every country that has decided to develop nuclear power, especially the newcomers to nuclear power programmes.

When it comes to global nuclear safety, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays the central role; it is the nuclear safety guardian, setting standards and providing valuable expertise to its members. We greatly value the work done by the IAEA in updating all the safety standards for nuclear power programme design and operation. The next crucial step is to ensure that those updated standards become the obligation of all the Member States, instead of being mere non-binding recommendations.

We have a first-hand example in our immediate neighbourhood — Belarus — of how the highly valued brand of the IAEA and its review services are used for manipulative public communication and how a country adopts a declarative and selective approach towards nuclear safety. We are convinced that such behaviour above all undermines the support of the public for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Lithuania strongly condemns the irresponsible decision of Belarus to build a nuclear power plant right on the border with Lithuania — and the EU — and in the immediate proximity to Vilnius — the Lithuanian capital — without a proper evaluation of population distribution and density and without conducting the proper consultative process.

We maintain that Belarus has not complied with article 17 of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, regarding

the evaluation of all relevant site-related factors and coordination with the neighbouring countries. Up until now, we have been trying to get answers from Belarus to the relevant technical questions on site selection; however, that process remains fruitless.

On multiple occasions, Belarus has used the IAEA's review services to create the appearance of enhancing nuclear safety. Yet Belarus does not share with the international expert community the peer-review mission reports. It does not disclose progress on the implementation of recommendations. It intentionally limits the scope of the missions to avoid reviewing inconvenient topics, as was the case for the IAEA site and external events design mission.

The peer-review missions are a very important instrument with respect to ensuring nuclear safety; therefore, any kind of manipulation in that field is unacceptable. We insist that Belarus publish all peer-review mission reports in full so that the information on the problems identified and progress in the implementation of recommendations are publicly available.

I must mention two other Conventions adopted under the umbrella of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe that Belarus has neglected: the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Recently in October, the members of the Aarhus Convention reiterated — for the fourth time — that Belarus was in non-compliance with the Convention. There is also a standing decision of December 2020 of the States parties to the Espoo Convention that confirms that Belarus did not justify the selection of the Ostrovets site over alternative locations.

There are multiple unresolved nuclear and environmental safety issues that are directly related to the Belarusian nuclear power programme, which pose an unacceptable threat to national security, the environment and the public health of the region. Lithuania maintains the position that the Belarusian nuclear power programme was constructed in violation of international nuclear safety standards and should not be in operation.

We encourage the international community to join the Lithuanian call on Belarus to implement the

highest international environmental, nuclear safety and radiation protection standards. We are convinced that the role of the IAEA in ensuring nuclear safety worldwide should be strengthened, along with IAEA standards, and that the use of the Agency's services should have a more binding character.

Mr. Andrew (Nigeria): It is my honour and pleasure to deliver Nigeria's statement at the thirty-sixth plenary meeting of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria welcomes the report (see A/76/232) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). My delegation also takes note of the comments of the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, and expresses its appreciation to him and his staff for their continuous work in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic in the greater part of 2020 and in the first half of 2021.

Nigeria particularly appreciates the tangible programmes introduced by the Agency during the coronavirus disease pandemic, which were very useful and will remain useful in helping developing countries combat the pandemic and prepare adequately for future ones.

The efficient resource mobilization and effective implementation of the INT 0098 interregional technical cooperation project, through which real time-polymerase chain reaction equipment and technical knowledge was provided to more than 128 countries, among other things, is a demonstration of the uses of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques that Member States currently enjoy from the Agency.

Nigeria welcomes the launch of the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative, through which Member States are being assisted to reduce the risk of the next zoonotic disease becoming another pandemic. Support for that programme is appropriately equipping and building the capacity of developing countries in readiness for any future pandemic.

My delegation aligns itself with the theme "Building resilience through hope" and reiterates Nigeria's commitment to the work of the IAEA. The report has demonstrated the work of the Agency in all aspects of its mandate. Nigeria particularly appreciates the value of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the socioeconomic development of countries.

Nigeria notes that, in line with its mandate pursuant to article II of its Statute, the IAEA has continued to support Member States, especially in the developing parts of the world, to use nuclear energy in a peaceful manner for human health purposes, including for cancer control, soil and water management and the detection of zoonotic diseases through nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques, and power generation, among other things.

My delegation welcomes the sections of the report on the work of the IAEA in delivering support to Member States through the Technical Cooperation Programme, and we appreciate the efforts of the Director General to strengthen the Programme. The Agency's work in nuclear safety and nuclear security, as well as safeguards and verification, are equally important and contribute significantly to international peace.

Nigeria supports those aspects of the Agency's work. In that regard, we reiterate our continuing support to the Agency in implementing its mandate on nuclear verification and monitoring. Nigeria considers that work to be an important building block of international peace and security. My delegation therefore continues to appreciate the efforts of the Agency in strengthening and enhancing its regulatory capacity for nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Nigeria is hopeful that the Agency projects entitled "Developing Safety Infrastructure for Regulating Nuclear Power Plants in Nigeria" and "Developing Safety Infrastructure for Regulating Non-Power Nuclear and Radiation Applications" will enhance the capacity of regulatory staff to regulate power plants. My delegation also hopes that the projects will strengthen Nigeria's national infrastructure for radiation protection, nuclear safety, emergency planning and a radioactive waste system in relation to exploration, mining, milling of radioactive ores and other ores associated with radioactive material.

The outcome of the recently concluded twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change further emphasizes the urgency of the present moment for the work of the IAEA and its support to Member States in making sure that our planet remains sustainable and improving outcomes with respect to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, Nigeria welcomes the report, supports the recommendations for action therein and requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts

to strengthen the relationship of the United Nations with the IAEA within the framework of the agreement governing that relationship.

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We commend Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA, who has worked tirelessly despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

With developing countries disproportionately affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology offer us solutions in monitoring and responding to the disease, as well as in preventing future outbreaks. Nuclear technology also provides relevant support for global economic recovery by supporting industries, ensuring better management of natural resources, promoting global health, contributing to food security and providing clean energy solutions.

The Philippines attaches the utmost importance to the Agency's research and development activities in the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, as well as their deployment to Member States through the Technical Cooperation Programme. Those activities support our national development efforts, including towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, we appreciate the Agency's support in the following areas.

The establishment of the Philippine Research Reactor Subcritical Assembly for Training, Education and Research resulted in the advancement of local nuclear training and research activities in the area of reactor physics and engineering.

The sustained operation of our electron beam facility resulted in the increased utilization of ionizing radiation, benefiting different sectors of society and advancing expertise in the country. One such application is the use of radiation-grafted materials for wastewater treatment.

We also note the use of isotopic techniques for food safety and security, clean water, the promotion of nutrition in infants and young children and the measurement of ultra-trace radionuclides in coral cores to reconstruct pathways and past impacts of nuclear activities.

The Philippines is also pleased to participate in the IAEA Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project.

In the Asia-Pacific region, we are one of the three Member States involved in the pilot implementation of the NUclear TEChnology for Controlling Plastic Pollution project.

The Philippines also appreciates the comprehensive assistance provided by the IAEA to Member States embarking upon or expanding their nuclear power programmes, based on the milestones approach. The Philippine Nuclear Energy Programme Inter-Agency Committee continues to study the adoption of a national position on a possible nuclear energy programme in the light of the recommendations of the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review mission conducted in 2018 and the Integrated Work Plan prepared in 2019.

The Philippines furthermore thanks the Agency for its continued assistance to Member States in the area of nuclear safety and security, including through the issuance of guidance documents and the organization of peer and advisory missions and training activities. The Philippines has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and we look forward to the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

As a gender champion, the Philippines values and welcomes the significant contributions of female scientists to accelerating and enlarging the peaceful application of nuclear energy throughout the world. We commend and support the Director General's goal to achieve gender parity in the IAEA by 2025, as well as the launch of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

Finally, it is our view that the Agency's safeguards and verification pillar is at the core of the global nuclear non-proliferation agenda. It provides the international community with the assurance that nuclear technologies are utilized in a safe, secure and peaceful manner. We look forward to more meaningful discussions and progressive outcomes on that front at the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the upcoming first meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Al-taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the delegation of Iraq welcomes the report (see A/76/232) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which sets out the achievements and activities of the Agency for the year 2020 with respect to the

three major issues, namely, nuclear technology, nuclear safety and security and verification.

Iraq commends the efforts of Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA, and his team in preparing the report. In that regard, Iraq underlines its support for draft resolution A/76/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which we have joined in sponsoring.

The delegation of Iraq would like to thank the Republic of Korea and to congratulate it for its assumption of the chairmanship of the IAEA Board of Governors and for its efforts in that regard.

Iraq's delegation commends the pivotal role of the IAEA in supporting the needs of Member States in responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic through its constructive and ongoing efforts towards building capacity and providing assistance to many Member States, including my country, Iraq, under the exceptional circumstances caused by the outbreak of the pandemic.

The global pandemic serves to underscore an important truth — global issues require global approaches that can be achieved only through multilateralism, international solidarity and international cooperation and partnership. Therefore, we must work together to face new emerging common challenges, including addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, as well as the existential threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that context, I reiterate the solidarity of the Government and the people of Iraq with all peoples in addressing those challenges.

The Technical Cooperation Programme remains a key function of the IAEA, in keeping with its Statute, for the promotion and transfer of nuclear technology for sustainable socioeconomic advancement in developing States. The Programme is a shared responsibility of both the IAEA and Member States, whose combined efforts lead to the success of the Programme, based on the requirements and needs of States.

It is necessary that resources be provided for the Programme's promotional activities in order to ensure sufficient resources for the Technical Cooperation Fund, commensurate with the resources earmarked for other activities mentioned in the Statute. Iraq reaffirms the priority given by the IAEA to technical cooperation activities that are of paramount importance for my country and other developing countries in relation to

capacity-building and harnessing nuclear techniques in the areas of health care, agriculture, food, water resources, radioactive isotopes and others. Such techniques could contribute to enhancing peace, health, prosperity and sustainable development throughout the world.

Iraq's technical and regulatory bodies work with the IAEA to develop an integrated programme of action to clean up radioactive contamination in Iraq, as well as a national strategy for handling and safely disposing of radioactive waste resulting from the various activities of medical centres and oil facilities.

Iraq's delegation reaffirms our unwavering support to the IAEA and its Director General in relation to the safeguards system. We appreciate the activities carried out by the IAEA in the areas of monitoring and verification, including with regard to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We support the diplomatic efforts made to reach a comprehensive solution to Iran's nuclear activities. We also stress that we strictly abide by nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Iraq emphasizes once again its steadfast support to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as it is the cornerstone for the international non-proliferation regime leading to nuclear disarmament according to article VI of the NPT, and to continue developing applications regarding the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes

The progress that has been made related to reducing the risks of nuclear weapons and consolidating the effectiveness of the safeguards system will continue to be incomplete in the absence of significant progress on nuclear disarmament according to the NPT and unless all countries are urged to join the Treaty in order to realize its noble objectives and achieve international peace and security.

Despite international and regional efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, that has not yet come to pass due to the refusal of the Israeli entity to support those endeavours. Iraq calls upon all States parties to continue to support those efforts during the second session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November, which will contribute to translating

those efforts into tangible results, culminating in establishing a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

We emphasize Iraq's stance on calling for efforts at the international level to establish the Middle East Zone. We also look forward to making concerted efforts to ensure the success of the tenth NPT Review Conference, which will be held in 2022. We hope that it will culminate in issuing a document that responds to the concerns of all States parties.

Mr. Utebaev (Kyrgyzstan): On behalf of Kyrgyzstan, we thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its report (see A/76/232). Having been an active and reliable partner of the IAEA since 2003, Kyrgyzstan highly appreciates the work carried out by the IAEA. My delegation also supports draft resolution A/76/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

We would like to inform the General Assembly that, during the sixty-fifth IAEA General Conference, held in September, the updated Strategic Master Plan for the Environmental Remediation of Uranium Legacy Sites in Central Asia was signed, which is evidence of the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to the ideas and goals of the IAEA.

Kyrgyzstan supports the statement made by the delegation of Kazakhstan today and would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Kyrgyzstan has been a full member of the IAEA for 18 years. However, we have been deprived of an opportunity and the right to be elected to the IAEA Board of Governors, which makes it impossible for us to participate in significant processes or to completely fulfil the existing potential of our cooperation with the Agency. For a long time, 20 States, including Kyrgyzstan, have not been able to become members of any of the eight informal country groups on the formal principles.

In that regard, we would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the root of the problem, in our opinion, is the unofficial status of those groups. The continuing absence of a formal legal basis for defining clear criteria for the allocation of countries to specific groups has created the preconditions for the current situation, which requires an urgent solution. All that creates inequality within the IAEA among its member States, which should be neither *de jure* nor *de facto*. Various States at various levels have repeatedly

spoken on that issue, but we have not yet seen a positive trend in that direction.

We call on all Member States to adhere to the principle of accessibility to nuclear science and technology for peaceful uses by each State, demonstrate transparency in this matter and respect the sovereign equality of IAEA members. Kyrgyzstan kindly requests the Agency to give priority to resolving this issue in order to create equal conditions in the exercise of the legitimate rights of IAEA member States.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his statement and for the annual report of the IAEA (see A/76/232). We commend the Agency for continuing its work while contributing to the global effort to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In that regard, allow me to emphasize three points.

First, Indonesia appreciates the Agency's assistance and cooperation during the COVID-19 outbreak, including in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization. The Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture responded immediately with strong technical support, expert guidance and laboratory backstopping. We continue to commend the Agency for dispatching detection equipment to States, including Indonesia, as well as supplies for the safe handling and analysis of COVID-19 samples.

Secondly, Indonesia notes with appreciation the continued support of the Agency in addressing the safety-related aspects of research, development and application activities in Indonesia. In particular, the IAEA-Indonesia radioactive waste facilities development project will contribute to raising safety standards on radioactive waste management in Indonesia. Indonesia is also delighted that significant progress has been achieved in the development of national regulation and policies as part of the implementation of previous Integrated Regulatory Review Service and Emergency Preparedness Review missions, which further strengthens the national regulatory infrastructure.

Thirdly, Indonesia values the Agency's technical assistance to promote the use of nuclear science and technology. Indonesia commends and highly appreciates the work of the Agency under the Veterinary

Diagnostic Laboratory Network, which supports the implementation of early detection of the African swine fever virus. Along with other recipients of that project, Indonesia stands ready to implement the NUClear TEChnology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative with the IAEA, which will start next year.

Indonesia is pleased with the implementation of the Knowledge Management Assist Visit virtual mission for Indonesia in 2021. That mission, together with other capacity-building-related missions, shows the continuous support provided by the Agency to Indonesia in developing its human resources.

In the light of the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) next year, Indonesia is of the view that the success of the Conference will provide a strong basis for the work of the IAEA. Indonesia gives its full support to all the areas of work of the IAEA that are relevant to the three pillars of the NPT.

Allow me to conclude by expressing Indonesia's support for draft resolution A/76/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which we are also pleased to co-sponsor. Indonesia's strong commitment to and support for the work of the IAEA will continue and we look forward to working together again in the future.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for submitting its report (see A/76/232).

My country recognizes the sovereign right to use nuclear technologies exclusively for peaceful purposes, as established in article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, we reaffirm our obligation to work for general and complete disarmament as the only guarantee to achieve international peace, security and stability.

At this juncture, it is increasingly necessary to pursue collective efforts to continue promoting the uses of nuclear science and technology for exclusively peaceful purposes and safeguard our future generations from annihilation by nuclear weapons. We therefore reaffirm the shared obligation to work for general and complete disarmament as the only guarantee to achieve international peace, security and stability.

My country is aware of the benefits of nuclear technology for the peoples of the world, not only in the generation of electrical energy but also in various areas such as health, agriculture, food security, the environment and research.

Guatemala therefore wishes to highlight the mutual benefit of reciprocal cooperation between the IAEA and its member countries, especially developing countries, as well as regional projects in which both parties enrich each other through the mutual contribution and receipt of knowledge, techniques, experiences and resources, with a positive and direct impact on communities.

I would like to emphasize that ionizing radiation technology is increasingly used in Guatemala in the field of medicine and is directly linked to the provision of fundamental health services for the Guatemalan population. Ensuring that people receive, both properly and safely, services resulting from nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes, through training in radiation protection and safety, is one of the main priorities of my country.

In that regard, Guatemala thanks the IAEA for promoting the capacity-building of its member States, in particular for its prompt action and response to support the emerging needs that arose during 2020 due to the coronavirus disease pandemic and the natural disaster emergencies caused by the Eta and Iota storms in my country.

We appreciate the Agency's responsiveness and the great value of the extrabudgetary contributions that make such cooperation possible, as well as the fundamental role of the Technical Cooperation Programme in directing the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology to the Member States.

In that respect, we emphasize the importance of novel initiatives to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the benefits that they provide. Among those initiatives, the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project, the NUClear TEChnology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative and the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy stand out.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that it is essential that countries join forces with the IAEA so that nuclear energy is used to increase health coverage and quality of health, the production and supply of food, the prevention and more effective reduction of the negative impacts of climate change and improved responses to natural disasters, among other high-priority

issues that contribute to the achievement of real and sustainable development.

Guatemala reaffirms its commitment to upholding and respecting the norms in the area of disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and acknowledges the important role of the IAEA safeguards system in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons technology. My country actively promotes the universality of the NPT and compliance with its provisions. We reiterate the fact that the States parties all undertake to clearly demonstrate their adherence to the letter and spirit of the Treaty. We strongly urge for tangible progress to be made at the next Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

Finally, we reiterate our support for the work of the IAEA and all its bodies, including its Board of Governors, of which my country is currently a member. Guatemala shares and promotes the "Atoms for peace and development" principle. We reaffirm our commitment to continue working with the organization and supporting its activities in favour of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Molla (Bangladesh): I wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for presenting the IAEA's annual report for 2020 (see A/76/232) and providing updates on the Agency's activities this year. Bangladesh thanks the Agency for continuing its activities during the reporting period amid the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic. We appreciate the Agency's assistance to Member States, including Bangladesh, to strengthen the capacity of their national laboratories to respond to the pandemic.

We support this year's draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/76/L.10).

We also welcome the IAEA Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action project to strengthen the preparedness and capabilities of Member States to rapidly detect and respond promptly to such pandemic outbreaks.

Bangladesh recognizes the inalienable rights of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including in power generation, health care and agriculture. Bangladesh also acknowledges the important role of the IAEA in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. In that regard, today's meeting is an

occasion to reflect on the Agency's role in supporting Member States in their pursuit of nuclear energy in a safe and secure manner.

We also take note of the increased requests by Member States for socioeconomic development support from the Agency with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To support our development efforts in Bangladesh, we are constructing the Rooppur nuclear power plant — the first in the country — with a view to generating safe, environmentally friendly and economically viable electricity, in strict compliance with IAEA standards. I take this opportunity to thank the IAEA for its support in successfully implementing our nuclear energy programme, including through establishing a regulatory framework and developing a radioactive waste-management system.

We appreciate the contribution of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme in supporting Member States in the areas of health care and nutrition, food and agriculture and the environment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Bangladesh also supports the application of nuclear technology to address environmental problems. We are encouraged by the Agency's Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative for collectively addressing global plastic pollution and would like to see the IAEA scale up its support to the developing countries in that regard.

In 2018, we signed our country programme framework for 2018-2023 with the Agency, with a focus on food; agriculture; water, soil and the environment; human health; nuclear power; nuclear and radiation safety and security; the development of nuclear knowledge; and industrial applications. Our technical cooperation projects on improving food security, stress-tolerant crop varieties and cancer management have proved beneficial to the lives and livelihoods of our people. Bangladesh attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA, fully endorses its "Atoms for peace and development" mandate and supports the central role played by the Agency in the implementation of its global verification regime.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Bangladesh's strong commitment to supporting the work of IAEA. We look forward to further strengthening our cooperation with the Agency for a better world through the application of nuclear science and technologies for peaceful purposes.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. I apologize to the delegations that are still waiting to take the floor. According to my list, today we should also have heard the United Arab Emirates, Argentina and Colombia, but I have suspended the list to allow time for delegations to speak in the exercise of the right of reply. We will hear the remaining speakers on Wednesday, 24 November, at 10 a.m. in this Hall.

May I remind delegations that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus would like to exercise its right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of Lithuania.

First, we note that there are specialized international platforms for discussing nuclear security. The accusation made with regard to the lack of safety of the new Belarusian nuclear power plant is extremely biased and unfounded. From the very beginning of the implementation of its national nuclear energy programme, Belarus has been responsible in its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European Union and other international partners.

We continue to take all the necessary measures to ensure the highest level of safety and security of our nuclear power plant and strictly comply with our international obligations. We apply the entire toolkit proposed by the IAEA to assess the various safety aspects of the nuclear power plant. Belarus has duly completed all of the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review missions required for countries to develop their first nuclear power plants.

The outcomes of the IAEA review missions in Belarus have attested many times to Belarus' commitment to complying with the highest international nuclear safety standards. In addition, the IAEA plans to conduct further review missions in Belarus this year to assess the infrastructure and safety of the operation of the nuclear power plant. The reports of previous IAEA review missions are accessible online.

Belarus intends to continue an open and professional level of cooperation with all interested States and relevant organizations on nuclear security and to ensure

the safe and sustainable operation of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. We note with regret that Lithuania prefers not to opt for expert-level dialogue, including through regional partnerships such as Belarus' partner review under the aegis of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group, and instead prefers to curtail its dialogue to one-sided, politically motivated statements.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of Belarus.

Lithuania fully respects the right of every country to develop nuclear power. On the other hand, any country that embarks upon a nuclear energy programme has the obligation to comply with the highest international nuclear safety standards and to take national decisions in consideration of the broader context of possible transboundary implications.

We have been closely following the development of the Belarus nuclear power plant at the expert level and other levels and have witnessed the selective approach taken by Belarus, as well as its lack of transparency and openness, with regard to the implementation of the standards and recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other modern nuclear safety standards and recommendations, including the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

The IAEA review missions are of key importance in terms of nuclear safety. However, as I mentioned before, Belarus' selective approach to those review missions is unacceptable. We therefore insist that Belarus publish all the review mission reports in full so that information on problems identified and progress on the implementation of recommendations are publicly available to experts and the international community.

We are also truly grateful to the European Commission, the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group and all the national experts involved in the

stress-test exercise on the Belarus nuclear power plant. We maintain that every single recommendation that the experts provided must be implemented without delay. However, it is also important to emphasize that the scope of the stress-test exercise was limited. It therefore cannot be considered as a comprehensive assessment of the power plant's nuclear safety and is only one component of modern international nuclear safety standards.

It is also unacceptable that the first unit of the nuclear power plant has commenced commercial operation even though multiple nuclear and environmental safety issues directly related to it remain unresolved. Also, numerous incidents, interruptions and failures of critical components of the nuclear power plant have occurred since the very beginning of the development of the project. However, Lithuania has never been properly informed about what happened and what the implications were.

Ms. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply a second time to reaffirm our commitment to all the international obligations we have undertaken to ensure the highest possible level of safety for our nuclear power plant. We are open to dialogue and to conducting all of the necessary review and assessment missions. A review mission has already been conducted this year, and another one is planned. I reiterate that all the results have been published and are fully available to anyone who wishes to consult them.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. As I previously mentioned, we shall hear the remaining speakers on Wednesday, 24 November, at 10 a.m. in this Hall. I thank my friend Mr. Kenji Nakano for assisting me, as well as all the interpreters, Permanent Representatives and other representatives who were kind enough to engage in the meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.