



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

30th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 8 November 2023, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Dibba (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 89 (continued)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/78/304)

Draft resolution (A/78/L.7)

Mr. Rosinas (Lithuania): Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.29), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We congratulate Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on his reappointment and thank him for delivering his briefing earlier today.

Lithuania strongly supports the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which plays a crucial role in ensuring radiation protection and nuclear safety, security and safeguards worldwide. We commend the Director General and the Agency staff for their courageous and tireless work to prevent nuclear accidents during Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine. We value the Director General's efforts to establish the seven indispensable pillars and five concrete principles for ensuring nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant

and strongly condemn Russia's actions to deliberately compromise them.

It is difficult to comprehend how a permanent member of the Security Council and a designated member of the IAEA Board of Governors started the unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine and its nuclear facilities while blatantly disregarding its obligations and commitments to the Agency, to the detriment of the entire United Nations system.

We reiterate our call for Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions, withdraw all its military and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. We also condemn Belarus for its support of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Lithuania shares its persistent concerns about the Russian-built Belarusian nuclear power plant situated just across the eastern border of the European Union. A week ago, on 1 November, Belarus began the commercial operation of unit 2 of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, despite the presence of unresolved nuclear safety issues, in flagrant disregard of international safety standards and recommendations. We are deeply troubled by the clear lack of a culture of safety, transparency and openness, as well as by unspecified repetitive equipment failures and delays in implementing safety improvements. Lithuania therefore urges Belarus to suspend operation of the nuclear power plant until all safety issues are comprehensively addressed.

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It is important for all States to proactively engage with the IAEA, inviting corresponding Agency missions to assess their nuclear activities in a timely manner. What is equally vital, however, is the timely and comprehensive implementation of the recommendations and suggestions provided by those missions.

Mrs. Tahzib-Lie (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.29). In addition, we would like to make some brief remarks in our national capacity.

We are honoured to serve on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We welcome the Agency's report (A/78/304) to the plenary of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, and we are pleased to join consensus on this important report. We warmly congratulate Director General Grossi on his reappointment, and we reaffirm our strong support for the Agency's technical, independent and impartial work. We continue to support the central role of the Agency in strengthening the global nuclear safety and security framework.

It is in our shared interest to continue working together to harness the benefits of atomic energy for all humankind. That requires upholding the highest standards of safety, security and safeguards and ensuring our collaborative effort to realize our common goals. As the world faces increasingly complex challenges, the Agency must be able to effectively implement its tasks. Let us ensure that the IAEA can continue its important and independent mission for the next years.

In that context, I would like to make an important point. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is quite concerned about the current cash shortage, as it poses an operational risk to the IAEA. Funding uncertainty hinders the efficient and effective implementation of important programmes. It also hinders proper planning with regard to recruitment, travel and procurement. In that connection, I recall that Director General Grossi recently emphasized that it is crucial for all Member States to make their payments on time and in full. The Kingdom of the Netherlands wholeheartedly supports his plea and tries to live up to those standards.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue to fully support the IAEA's work and important mission.

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): As a proud sponsor of draft resolution A/78/L.7, on the report (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Philippines extends its heartfelt appreciation to the IAEA, under the leadership of Director General Rafael Grossi, for its crucial efforts in advancing the role of atomic energy in global peace, health and prosperity.

In a world marked by growing uncertainties, economic and geopolitical conflicts and worsening effects of climate change, the IAEA's work has gained even more significance. Our nation proudly emphasizes the widespread use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as we strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Guided by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s eight-point socioeconomic agenda, the Philippine Development Plan, and the Philippine Country Programme Framework 2022–2027, developed in cooperation with the IAEA, we are deeply involved in the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme. Our areas of focus include nuclear-technology applications in food and agriculture, natural resources and the environment, human health and nutrition, energy and industry, nuclear and radiation safety, radioactive waste management and nuclear security. We are also working to enhance our cooperation in nuclear technology through high-level visits, and we look forward to Mr. Grossi's visit to the Philippines.

In alignment with President Marcos's directive that we diversify our energy sources, we are exploring nuclear energy as a reliable, secure, sustainable and affordable power supply. With the support of the IAEA, we are crafting a comprehensive nuclear law to ensure compliance with nuclear safety, security and liability conventions, and to establish an independent nuclear regulatory body. This year marked the launch of the Philippine Research Reactor-1 Subcritical Assembly for Training, Education and Research facility, which supports education and research in nuclear science and technology. We reiterate our call for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to be seen as co-equal with disarmament and non-proliferation, not merely ancillary to them. We urge all States to support the IAEA's work in maximizing nuclear energy for a better future.

The Philippines is actively engaged in various IAEA regional and interregional projects, including the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative, the Asian Network for Education in Nuclear Technology, which integrates nuclear

science and technology into the secondary education system, and the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories Phase 2. During the sixty-seventh IAEA General Conference, the Philippines, as the penholder for the Group of 77 and China, advocated for gender equality and geographic diversity within the IAEA secretariat and its interactions with Member States, aligning the Agency's administrative goals with those of the United Nations. We look forward in August 2024 to hosting the first International Nuclear Science Olympiad, an annual international science competition for secondary-school students, to which we hope to welcome participants from all the countries present here. Through those initiatives, we aim to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy at a global level and ensure that its benefits reach grass-roots levels and future generations.

In conclusion, we believe that the Agency's safeguards and verification pillars remain fundamental to the global nuclear non-proliferation agenda. They provide international assurance that nuclear technologies are being used exclusively for peaceful purposes. We stress the importance of States' compliance with their obligations under the relevant safeguards agreements and their full cooperation with the Agency in its independent and impartial work.

Mr. Eustathiou de los Santos (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Uruguay would like to thank Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA, for its annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304), and to recognize his hard work at the helm of the Agency in a challenging geopolitical context. We also thank Argentina for submitting draft resolution A/78/L.7, which brings us here together today.

The work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the areas of nuclear technology, safety and security, verification and monitoring, and with regard to cooperation, education and fostering know-how, has become increasingly pertinent and necessary. In our current circumstances, we should continue to promote the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and safeguard future generations from the devastating possibility of a nuclear catastrophe. Uruguay champions the observance of and respect for international legal norms in the areas of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that

context, we recognize the IAEA's important role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons technology through its safeguards.

Cooperation is essential for developing countries. In that regard, we thank the expert medical physicists from the IAEA who travelled to Uruguay to train technicians in March of this year. The objective of that initiative was to explore the possibilities of improving standards in breast-cancer detection, in addition to developing a national screening programme in accordance with international recommendations. In that regard, we want to highlight the importance of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and their positive outcomes for health care. Within the framework of her official visit to the IAEA, our Minister of Health, Karina Rando, participated in an important Women in Nuclear IAEA meeting that highlighted the importance of nuclear technologies as one of the most powerful tools we have for combating cancer. At the meeting, Uruguay highlighted our country's legacy in the field of oncological care, in particular the contribution of Raúl Leborgne, a Uruguayan radiographer whose invention led to the development of the first mammograph in the 1950s.

In conclusion, we welcome the findings of the IAEA report and once again express our support for the work of the IAEA in assisting Member States, both in the long-term and immediately, especially in times of extreme need.

Mr. Ahmed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Arab Republic of Egypt has noted the annual report (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with interest and would like to express its appreciation to the Agency's Director General Grossi for its preparation. We also commend the efforts of Argentina with regard to draft resolution A/78/L.7 and welcome Mr. Grossi's reappointment as Director General of the Agency for a new term from December 2023 to December 2027.

As one of the founding members of the IAEA and a leading country in the area of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in establishing nuclear reactors, Egypt has always closely followed the Agency's activities related to harnessing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, enhancing internal cooperation, providing technical support, guarantees and verification and ensuring nuclear safety and security. Egypt also contributes to supporting the Agency's efforts and its

secretariat's activities regarding all those fields under the leadership of the Director General, particularly as we are taking initial steps towards operating our very first national nuclear power plant for the production of electricity.

Egypt calls once again for redoubling efforts to provide the Agency with the funding and resources it needs to carry out its mandated tasks in the field of technical assistance and in achieving a balance among the three pillars of its work in line with its Statute, in order to fulfil the objectives for which it was established. It is also important to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Agency's activities related to the promotion of the various peaceful uses of atomic energy, particularly for developing countries, bearing in mind that the peaceful use of atomic energy is an inalienable right, as provided for in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that respect, Egypt continues to support the Agency's activities providing technical cooperation and ensuring nuclear safety and security, while ascribing particular importance to the priorities and needs of the countries of Africa and the Group of 77 and China in the context of enhancing the Agency's role in development.

Egypt stresses that the IAEA is the body internationally mandated to issue reports on States' compliance with their obligations regarding nuclear non-proliferation. Egypt also stresses that the Agency plays a pivotal role, as outlined in its Statute, in advancing nuclear disarmament efforts and verifying the elimination of nuclear weapons, which constitutes its genuine contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to States' implementation of all their obligations under the NPT, including those enumerated in article VI of the Treaty.

Egypt continues to follow with interest the IAEA's efforts in the area of the implementation and verification of safeguards, while ensuring that it can monitor any diversion of nuclear material for non-peaceful uses, in accordance with the comprehensive safeguards agreements that represent the legal basis for the Agency's work under the NPT. That is a task that requires achieving universality for those agreements. However, we emphasize that the development of the Agency's safeguards system should not entail any additional obligations beyond the contractual obligations under the NPT, and that the application of the safeguards approach at the State level must have the consent of the State concerned and not be based

merely on consultation with it. In that context, Egypt would like to reiterate the reservations and concerns it expressed regarding the *Safeguards Statement and Background for 2022* implementation report, which contained new wordings and technical elements that IAEA member States were not consulted about. Egypt has already provided the Agency's secretariat with a memorandum in that regard.

Egypt looks forward to the Agency's implementation of its mandate in accordance with the decision to implement safeguards in the Middle East within the framework of States' legitimate aspirations to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region and taking the relevant practical steps. That would follow the important progress made through the convening of three sessions of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, with the fourth to be held in the upcoming days with the IAEA's participation and valued contribution.

In conclusion, Egypt has joined the list of countries sponsoring the draft resolution submitted by Argentina on the IAEA's annual report and looks forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presentation of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 2022 (see A/78/304) and draft resolution A/78/L.7, introduced by Argentina. We also welcome the presence of Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA, at this meeting.

We reiterate Cuba's support for the important work of the IAEA and the Agency's contribution to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the IAEA's Department of Technical Cooperation for its efforts to meet the objectives proposed for country-level programmes. We appreciate its contribution to measuring the environmental effects of a large fire that occurred in Cuba last year at a supertanker base and acknowledge the support it gave Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, in September 2022, including by providing mobile X-ray equipment for four hospitals and equipment for determining the presence of environmental contaminants and measuring water quality.

We also want to highlight the development of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean for almost 40 years. The Agreement has contributed to supporting countries of our region in implementing IAEA initiatives aimed at tackling global issues in the areas of health and the environment.

Despite the notable cooperation between Cuba and the IAEA, we should not fail to mention that the Agency's secretariat has regularly continued to face difficulties in acquiring the scientific equipment approved for projects with our country. That is because companies in the United States — and even in third countries that benefit from American capital — cannot sell us specialized equipment for the application of nuclear techniques as a consequence of the restrictions imposed by the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba. That significantly increases our costs for acquiring equipment and capacity-building, delays the execution of our national projects under the auspices of the IAEA and excludes us from opportunities to participate in projects in our region. We reject unilateral coercive measures that contravene article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by hindering international cooperation with developing countries and limiting their access to materials, equipment and technologies for peaceful nuclear activities subject to such measures.

The double certification established by our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol, in addition to the satisfactory results of the IAEA's inspections in Cuba and our updating of our national nuclear security implementation plan, confirm our commitment to the use of nuclear energy for strictly peaceful purposes and the importance we attach to nuclear and radiological safety. In that connection, we are proud that our country is recognized for its culture of nuclear safety. As part of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, in May Cuba hosted the regional meeting on the authorization process for evaluating the safety of medical and industrial facilities, enabling us to acquire and share experiences with other Latin American States. We have also contributed to and gained experience within the framework of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, which contributes to improving nuclear, radiological and physical safety in Ibero-American countries.

The IAEA is the framework for the adoption of international nuclear security standards, which must result from transparent and inclusive multilateral negotiations with the participation of all States. The application of the Agency's safeguards verification system is essential to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including for verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear energy programmes. We reiterate that in order to maintain the credibility of the IAEA's safeguards activities, it is imperative to continue to ensure its secretariat's impartial and professional performance. We advocate for respect for the inalienable right of States to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination or conditions.

We continue to believe that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, and in following that precept, we will continue to support efforts aimed at universalizing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, and his dedicated team for their outstanding efforts in advancing the Agency's priorities. Their remarkable work is aptly reflected in the comprehensive annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304) presented today (see A/78/PV.29). I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Grossi on his recent unanimous reappointment for a second term as Director General of the IAEA.

Namibia reiterates its unwavering commitment to the safeguards system, recognizing the significance of comprehensive safeguards agreements, coupled with additional protocols, as the prevailing verification standards under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In adherence to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, Namibia is proud to be one of the nations that revised their small-quantities protocols during the review period, in a clear demonstration of our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and our assurance that all nuclear material and activities within our borders are for peaceful purposes only. We encourage States that have not yet concluded additional protocols and small-quantities protocols to do so, ensuring the full implementation of their safeguards. We commend the Agency for its invaluable work in conducting 62 safety- and security-related peer review

and advisory service missions, which have supported 46 Member States in applying safety standards and nuclear security guidance publications, contributing significantly to the development of adherence to nuclear safety and security standards.

In the period under review, the Agency played a pivotal role in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Notably, that includes the recent launch of the Rays of Hope initiative, which holds great promise for combating cancer across the African continent, where access to radiotherapy is still limited, with more than 20 countries lacking even a single life-saving radiotherapy machine for their populations. Namibia commends the Agency for its efforts to enhance the sustainability and resilience of food and agriculture production, as well as related livelihoods in Member States, through climate-smart agricultural approaches that address various challenges, including zoonotic diseases, plant pests, food-safety risks, climate change, biothreats and nuclear or radiological emergencies. The Agency's Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative has been particularly beneficial for Namibia in that regard.

We also want to express our appreciation for the memorandum of understanding signed between the Agency and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The collaboration leverages innovative research and development activities that harness the comparative advantages offered by nuclear and related technologies to transform agrifood systems. We acknowledge and appreciate the collaboration among the IAEA, the FAO and Namibian scientists who are advancing the application of drip irrigation to protect crops during severe droughts. That effort has yielded tangible results for farmers in four of Namibia's 14 regions, enabling the use of a combination of nuclear techniques and water-saving irrigation technology, specifically small-scale drip irrigation. Such advancements in nuclear science and technology for clean, reliable and affordable energy, as well as isotope hydrology for enhancing water security, are very welcome.

Namibia recognizes the Agency's significant efforts to increase the representation of women in the professional and higher categories, as evidenced in the report. In that regard, we wholeheartedly support programmes such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme and the Lise Meitner

Programme, which empower women to pursue careers in nuclear-related fields.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation for the exemplary work of the IAEA Liaison Office in New York under the able leadership of Ambassador Vivian Okeke. Namibia is grateful for their strategic partnership and tireless efforts to raise awareness about the Agency's critical work. We eagerly anticipate continued collaboration with the Agency, particularly in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear science, technology and applications.

Mr. Mahmud (Nigeria): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation of the annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304) and update on the activities of the IAEA (see A/78/PV.29). I also want to congratulate Mr. Grossi on his reappointment, which is an unquestionable testament to his hard work and that of the members his team. Nigeria wishes them every success in the task ahead and reaffirms its support for the IAEA in discharging its mandate.

My delegation is convinced that nuclear weapons remain a principal threat to humankind and that their elimination would be a major boost to international peace and security. We need to work together to eliminate those dangerous weapons for the sake of greater socioeconomic development. The cost of the maintenance and modernization of such weapons is inexcusable when compared to the resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that could further strengthen societies' growth and peaceful development. My delegation reiterates that the funds expended on stockpiling arms could be channelled to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for development purposes. Nigeria therefore calls on nuclear-weapon States to be more transparent in their commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world and to redirect their resources to socioeconomic development. Nigeria renews its call for accelerating nuclear disarmament and bringing under a safeguards regime the activities of non-nuclear-weapon States that have yet to sign and ratify their IAEA comprehensive safeguard agreements.

We also call on all Member States to apply the agreements to all their nuclear activities with a view to accelerating the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, we underscore the importance of

continued respect for the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and stress the IAEA's central role in that regard through its continued technical support and cooperation, as well as of maximizing the use of science and technology for socioeconomic development. The International Atomic Energy Agency should continue to assist Member States, especially developing countries, on the various peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly electricity generation, the protection of human health, water management and the safeguarding of the environment. Strengthening the activities of the IAEA by enhancing its funding is very relevant in that regard.

Nigeria will continue to resolutely support the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We remain mindful of the beneficial uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and reaffirm the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear technologies for their development aspirations. That is consistent with the relevant articles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Last year, with the assistance of IAEA, Nigeria finalized its draft atomic energy bill to make it more coherent and consonant with its comprehensive nuclear legislation and with international nuclear regimes and policies. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the IAEA's lead role in the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and of nuclear security and safety standards, as well as verification and safeguards. While we applaud the Agency's assistance and contribution to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology in Africa, especially in the areas of food and agriculture, human health and nutrition, radiation safety and human resource development, my delegation urges for a deepening of its collaborative efforts with Nigeria in the areas of health and energy, given our current Administration's Renewed Hope Agenda regarding development priority projects.

In conclusion, we want to acknowledge the good work of one of our own, Ambassador Vivian Okeke, in the IAEA, and encourage the Director General and his team to intensify their efforts to ensure that nuclear technology is used responsibly for peaceful purposes. We also encourage the IAEA to continue its efforts to overcome the challenges to the beneficial uses of nuclear energy.

Ms. Jones (United Kingdom): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Director General

Grossi's leadership for a second term and to reaffirm the United Kingdom's strong support for the vital work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its importance as an independent body, especially during such challenging times. We are pleased to be a sponsor of this year's draft resolution (A/78/L.7), which demonstrates the breadth of work undertaken by the IAEA this year.

The IAEA's member States and partners represent a wide spectrum of perspectives and interests. We are united, however, in our agreement on the fundamental need for safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and the benefits they bring, including in the areas of energy, human health, food production, water management, environmental protection and more. The IAEA's work to facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and its provision of robust safety and security frameworks and implementation of safeguards means that it makes an essential contribution to global prosperity and security, including supporting countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to enable all of us to continue to reap those benefits, as well as to prevent the proliferation of weapons, it is incumbent on us all to fully support the IAEA in delivering its mandate as an independent and impartial organization. That includes the timely payment of financial contributions. The United Kingdom was pleased to contribute €4 million to the Technical Cooperation Fund in September to help support projects in 2024. We would also like to express our appreciation to all members of the IAEA secretariat, especially those who have worked this year in challenging environments.

Challenges remain ahead, especially on nuclear security and non-proliferation. But we are confident that with Director General Grossi's integrity and skilful stewardship, the IAEA will continue its vital work, bringing benefits to us all.

Mr. Pretterhofer (Austria): Austria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.29), and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Austria is the proud host country to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Agency and its Director General for all their efforts across its mandate.

The IAEA is crucial to helping ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology are utilized for peaceful purposes while the associated risks are minimized. Austria supports the Agency's work and its activities in the broader field of nuclear science and technology, such as health care and food security. Recent developments and changes in the global security architecture have shaken the entire nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime to the core. Nuclear risks have not been this high for decades. Yet past progress, agreements and commitments are being reversed, as we have seen with Russia's de-ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. New and multiple nuclear arms races must be avoided. The IAEA is facing a very heavy political agenda. In the light of Russia's ongoing aggression, Austria would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Agency for all its efforts and for all the risks it is taking to improve nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. In that regard, Austria has contributed €1 million to the Agency's crucial work on the ground. We also welcome Director General Grossi's efforts with his outlining of the five basic principles for protecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and we strongly support the seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict.

Like many other States, Austria is faced with the urgent task of diversifying and decarbonizing its energy sources. With regard to the use of nuclear power, however, Austria's position is well known. We do not consider nuclear power compatible with the concept of sustainable development. States that choose to use nuclear technology must comply with the highest standards of safety and security measures, without shortcuts or loopholes. Strict safety measures for the use of nuclear technologies are crucial not just for today's population but for future generations. Technical cooperation is an integral part of Austria's activities. While we continue to have reservations about nuclear power generation, Austria encourages the Agency to increase its efforts for education and science with regard to non-power-related nuclear science and technology applications.

We continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and deeply regret that despite intense diplomatic efforts, there has been no return to the full implementation of the JCPOA. Austria, as the host of the talks, is ready to facilitate the discussions at any time. Austria reaffirms its strong commitment

to all relevant international nuclear safety conventions and emphasizes the need to enhance effective and efficient international peer review processes, taking into account the three principles as established under the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety by the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

Finally, Austria reiterates that strengthening the taboo on nuclear weapons and upholding the rules-based international order are now more urgent than ever.

Ms. Nam (New Zealand): I would like to thank Director General Grossi for his presentation this morning (see A/78/PV.29).

New Zealand is pleased to co-sponsor and support draft resolution A/78/L.7, concerning the annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which constitutes a factual and objective record of the Agency's activities over the past year. The IAEA is an integral component of the international rules-based order. It is testament to the Agency's good work that demand from member States for the Agency's services, advice and support has never been higher, as the report shows. New Zealand is a steadfast supporter of the Agency, and we commend it for its commitment to faithfully fulfilling its mandate with diligence and professionalism, notwithstanding the serious challenges confronting its work.

One of the foremost challenges continues to be Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its unjustifiable and unprecedented nuclear threats, which have imposed a considerable strain on the Agency's resources. In recognition of that tremendous pressure, New Zealand made its largest ever extrabudgetary contribution of \$500,000 earlier this year to support the Agency's critical efforts to maintain nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. The Agency's stabilizing presence in Ukraine is an explicit demonstration of the IAEA's substantial and valuable contribution to international peace and security. As the report shows, however, it is only one of the many ways that the IAEA serves the international community. Accordingly, we urge all Member States to lend the Agency their full support and cooperation to facilitate its important work.

Ms. Della-Porta (Australia): Australia thanks the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its report (see A/78/304) and Argentina for introducing draft resolution A/78/L.7, which Australia is pleased to co-sponsor.

Australia has always been a strong supporter of the IAEA. We are a founding member of the Agency and a long-standing member of its Board of Governors. The sixty-seventh General Conference of the IAEA, at which the resolutions referred to today were adopted, was a very challenging meeting for the Agency and its membership. Australia is pleased that all the technical resolutions were adopted by consensus this year and that the Agency was able to adopt resolutions on several important strategic and procedural issues, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The General Conference occurred against a backdrop of several significant threats to global peace and security, making the work of the IAEA more important than ever. As Russia's illegal and immoral war against Ukraine looks likely to enter a third year, President Putin's irresponsible nuclear threats and his decisions to suspend the New Start Treaty and, only last week, to revoke Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) demonstrate his contempt for international rules and norms in pursuit of his own political objectives.

We continue to condemn Russia's illegal seizure and control of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which risks causing a nuclear accident with significant radiological consequences. We commend the professionalism of the IAEA staff who are continuing to ensure nuclear safety and security at Ukraine's nuclear facilities. We call on Russia to withdraw immediately from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear site and from all of Ukraine. As a matter of urgency, we also urge Iran to resolve all outstanding safeguards issues under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the IAEA in a full and technically credible manner. Australia continues to call on Iran to recommit to full compliance with its nuclear-related commitments and to reverse its steps away from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We thank the Agency for its work in Iran, which is essential to managing geopolitical tensions in the region.

Australia continues to condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing pursuit of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, including tactical nuclear weapons. We are also troubled by indications of preparations for a seventh nuclear test. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reverse course and call for a strong and united response by the international community to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's provocations. We call for the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea to permit the return of IAEA safeguards inspectors, to sign and ratify the CTBT and to take steps towards returning to full compliance with IAEA safeguards and the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Australia continues to be a strong supporter of the Agency's transformative work, applying nuclear science and technology for tangible outcomes in human health, agriculture and environmental protection. Australia was proud to contribute AU\$3.5 million of extrabudgetary funding recently to support IAEA flagship initiatives in our region. They include Rays of Hope, the Global Water Analysis Laboratory Network, the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

We reiterate our full support for the IAEA, and we call on all nations to respect its mandate, independence and technical authority. The Agency and its staff, under the leadership of Director General Grossi, have Australia's full confidence as they promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology and support global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.29) and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the participation of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in today's meeting. Ukraine also welcomes the annual report (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 2022, which provides an overview of the Agency's activities during the most challenging year in its history. We have taken positive note of the fact that the annual report for 2022, like all the Agency's previous reports, fully complies with the norms of international law, the IAEA Statute and countries' respective safeguards agreements.

In 2022, a nuclear power attacked a peaceful non-nuclear country, seized Europe's largest nuclear power plant and occupied the territory where one of the worst nuclear disasters in history occurred — the Chernobyl exclusion zone. By occupying Ukraine's nuclear facilities, which are designated for peaceful purposes, as confirmed by the conclusions of IAEA experts, that country, which presents itself as a leader in the nuclear energy industry, grossly violated every

possible nuclear safety and security standard. We are grateful to Mr. Grossi for his and the IAEA secretariat's valuable contributions to documenting the barbaric actions of the Russian Federation — a designated member of the IAEA Board of Governors.

Russia's complete disregard for generally accepted principles of nuclear safety is jeopardizing the safe operation of Ukraine's nuclear power plants every day. The planting of landmines and the construction of firing positions on the territory of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the presence of armed military personnel at the plant, the shelling of the infrastructure of the Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant and of the Ukrainian energy sector generally pose a grave risk to nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and far beyond. Moreover, the following actions violate the 1949 Geneva Conventions and its Protocol Additional I, as well as IAEA General Conference resolution GC(XXXIV)/RES/533, of October 1990.

The fundamental human and workers' rights of the Ukrainian personnel at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are frequently and repeatedly violated, and a number of Ukrainian employees are being exposed to life-threatening occupational safety and health risks.

Moreover, a number of the Ukrainian employees of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant have been detained by the special services of the Russian occupying forces. They were forced to return to their homes and to work. Many Ukrainian workers that operate the nuclear reactor installations and equipment at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant were threatened into signing contracts with the occupying forces.

In addition, the emergency response and occupational safety and health management systems at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are no longer functioning effectively.

On 30 September, the occupiers switched power unit 4 of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to "hot shutdown" mode, and on 16 October 2023, power unit 5 was also switched to "hot shutdown" mode. In addition, the occupation administration of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant put power unit 6 into "shut down for testing" mode. All those actions violate the current licence, which covers the operation of all Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant power units in "cold shutdown" mode only.

Ukraine has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to the technical problems at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant due to lack of proper maintenance, scheduled repairs and availability of spare parts.

The IAEA Board of Governors adopted three resolutions, which expressed the Board's grave concern that the Russian Federation's aggression is impeding the Agency from fully and safely conducting safeguards verification activities at Ukrainian nuclear facilities within its internationally recognized borders. Its 17 November 2022 resolution, in particular, does not recognize the Russian Federation's attempts to take ownership of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Russia failed to implement any of those three resolutions. In response to Russia's persistent illegal actions, the IAEA General Conference, at its 67th session, adopted a resolution on 28 September 2023, calling for the immediate withdrawal of all unauthorized military and other unauthorized personnel from Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and for the plant to be immediately returned to the full control of the competent Ukrainian authorities.

The broad cross-regional support for this resolution demonstrates an understanding of the problems caused by Russia's occupation of Ukraine and its Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Russia must be held accountable for its complete disregard of the norms of international law and, in particular, for its violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the IAEA Statute.

Ukraine encourages the participation in President Zelenskyy's peace formula. Its first item focuses on radiation and nuclear safety and envisages that Ukrainian nuclear power plants and installations must operate safely under the full sovereign control of Ukraine, with the IAEA playing a leading role in maintaining nuclear safety and security, as well as in implementing safeguards in civilian nuclear facilities.

Mrs. Sanabria de Montiel (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Paraguay thanks Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the presentation of the 2022 annual report (A/78/304). My delegation also thanks the Republic of Argentina for introducing draft resolution A/78/L.7, which we support and sponsor.

Paraguay values the role of the Agency in the promotion of nuclear techniques among its interested member States, especially in the area of health. We highlight its contribution to the improvement of such capabilities to deal with diseases such as cancer and infectious diseases.

My country also stresses the importance of nuclear technology in food safety and security, animal health and production; environmental protection, water resource management, as well as other fields related to the use of radioisotopes and ionizing radiation.

Paraguay supports the Agency's initiatives in nuclear technology development such as progress in isotope hydrology and the formation of the Global Water Analysis Laboratory Network. That research and sharing of experiences will enable countries to achieve universal and equitable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 6 and in the framework of the Water Action Agenda.

We especially welcome the global Atoms4Food programme, aimed at assisting Member States to increase food production, food security, agricultural planning and nutritional programming using nuclear and isotopic techniques, considering last year's global figure of more than 700 million hungry people in the world.

Paraguay prioritizes the training of national human resources and promotes research in the field of nuclear applications in medicine, agriculture and industry. It also promotes women's access to training opportunities. With regard to nuclear medicine, my country is committed to facilitating access to the latest technology and recognizes its relevance in that regard.

The Agency plays an important role in nuclear safety technology. We appreciate the Agency's continued dedication to researching and keeping abreast of the programmes and actions undertaken by member States in the nuclear field. We note the exceptional reliability and quality of these reports.

Paraguay has closely watched the progress of nuclear development in the world and the safety measures implemented. We wish to emphasize the importance of measures to improve compliance with the safeguards system in order to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy. Comprehensive safeguards agreements between the IAEA and 178 States, many of which are implementing additional protocols, help ensure

that those countries are not engaged in clandestine nuclear weapons programmes. That builds security and confidence, while contributing to the overall goal of preventing nuclear proliferation. It also helps to establish a basis for international collaboration in nuclear technology without conflict, especially with developing countries.

Paraguay has confidence in multilateralism as the most appropriate way to address global challenges and therefore supports the IAEA and the Director General in taking the necessary steps to assure the international community of concrete safeguards.

We emphasize the need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and express our grave concern about the existence of undeclared or unintentional nuclear activities that could endanger peace and security. We reiterate and emphasize that the safeguards regime constitutes the cornerstone of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We believe that cooperation is essential to maintain safe and secure nuclear development and, in that regard, we underline the importance of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2022-2025. The issue of nuclear security needs to be addressed in the relevant international forums. We advocate the coordination of the nuclear security agendas of each country, considering the current scenarios and threats.

The delegation of Paraguay would like to highlight that the IAEA technical cooperation programme is fundamental for horizontal cooperation, as demonstrated by the numerous projects and their high implementation rate, and Paraguay is one of the countries with the highest percentage of project implementation in the Latin American region.

We thank the IAEA and reaffirm our commitment to continue to work together to promote the peaceful use of nuclear techniques and their applications, ensuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to the peaceful use of nuclear energy worldwide.

Mr. Ganou (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Burkina Faso is pleased to be taking part in today's debate on the 2022 report (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and we would like to sincerely thank Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi for transmitting the report, which also

provides valuable updates on the Agency's activities this year.

Burkina Faso is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/78/L.7, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". We fully support the mandate and work of the Agency, which plays an indispensable role in leveraging nuclear science and technology for sustainable development. The IAEA remains a reliable and important partner for the international community. Despite the prolonged disruptions that have been caused by increased geopolitical tensions, it has continued to honour its mandate to serve States with the greatest possible professionalism.

Burkina Faso has continued to benefit from the Agency's technical cooperation and capacity-building programme. With the support of the Agency, we have made progress in the use of nuclear techniques for sustainable development in areas such as food and agriculture, human and animal health, water resource management and environmental protection. We reiterate our strong support for the IAEA and its mandate to promote the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We thank the IAEA for its ongoing technical support and look forward to effectively implementing our 2023–2028 national framework plan, signed on 28 September on the margins of the Agency's General Conference at its sixty-seventh session.

Technical cooperation must be tailored to the needs and priorities identified at national levels. It must also be beneficial, especially for developing countries. In that regard, we encourage the IAEA to pursue its technical cooperation efforts in order to address the enormous and diverse challenges facing developing countries. In that connection, ensuring people's affordable access to reliable, sustainable and modern energy services remains a priority for Burkina Faso. To that end, we believe that our country needs to develop modular nuclear power plants, and we appreciate the IAEA's continued support for our efforts to develop our nuclear-energy programme.

Burkina Faso calls on the international community to continue to support the work of the IAEA and its contributions to strengthening international security and development. As a member of the Board of Governors for the 2023–2025 term, Burkina Faso is committed to working with Director General Grossi and member States to effectively implement the Agency's mandate. On 13 September 2021, my country

signed an agreement with the Agency designating the Bobo-Dioulasso Insectary as an IAEA Collaborating Centre to help implement operational programmes aimed at managing the tsetse-fly population using the sterile-insect technique. My country is more than ever committed to implementing such activities in order to help eradicate the scourge of trypanosomiasis, which is hampering the socioeconomic development of many African countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that if we each make our own particular contributions, in addition to uniting our efforts, that will enable us to help the IAEA effectively fulfil its noble motto of "Atoms for peace and development".

Mr. Kim Sunghoon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation would like to once again congratulate Director General Rafael Grossi on his reappointment as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We reiterate our full confidence in his leadership and look forward to continuing our close cooperation over the next four years.

We thank the Agency for transmitting its annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304), as well as the representative of Argentina for introducing draft resolution A/78/L.7, which is before the Assembly today. We continue to support the IAEA's efforts to universalize its comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols and its revised small quantities protocol. We urge all who have not yet done so to conclude and bring those key instruments into force without delay.

At the sixty-seventh General Conference, 178 member States adopted by consensus the resolution entitled "Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea". The resolution clearly stated once again that under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State, and that all member States should fully, comprehensively and immediately implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. My delegation would like to point out that those resolutions mandate a complete ban on trading in arms with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately cease all of its provocations, including its illegal nuclear

and ballistic-missile programmes, and to take concrete steps towards complete denuclearization.

We appreciate the Agency's continued monitoring and verification of Iran's activities. Amid the deadlock in the restoration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the troubling report on the issue from the Director General, we hope to see progress that will restore the international community's confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The Republic of Korea would also like to point to the Agency's resolution entitled "Nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine," the first such adopted since the war against Ukraine began. My delegation commends the Director General and his team for their tireless efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. We fully support the Director General's five concrete principles for protecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as the continued and reinforced presence of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya.

My Government also appreciates the Agency's continued monitoring and review of the safety of Japan's discharge of contaminated water into the sea, as described in the annual report. The disposal should be implemented in accordance with the plan reviewed by the Agency in a scientific and objective manner, and the entire process must be consistent with the relevant international safety standards and laws. We expect the IAEA to continue its mandated monitoring activities and to share relevant information and data with the international community in a transparent way. My Government is fully supporting the Agency's through active participation in the task force to review the discharge and in sampling and corroboration activities.

We have actively contributed to expanding the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy by supporting various elements of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, such as the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action, the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution, the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories and the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We reaffirm our support for the IAEA's Platform on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications and its Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative for developing advanced reactors with appropriate regulations. We also welcome the establishment of the Nuclear Security Demonstration and Training Centre in Seibersdorf in Austria.

On the other hand, we note with concern that the IAEA is currently struggling with an unprecedented liquidity challenge due to a delay in some member States' payment of their regular-budget assessed contributions. We have always emphasized the importance of providing the Agency with the financial and human resources adequate to enabling it to fulfil its unique statutory obligations. In that regard, we would like to point to article IV (c) of the Statute, which states that all member States "shall fulfil in good faith the obligation assumed by them in accordance with this Statute."

Finally, we would like to highlight once again the importance of better representation of the IAEA. In that regard, it is regrettable that after 24 years, the amendment to article VI of the IAEA Statute has not yet entered into force. The amendment provides for adapting to the Agency's ever-increasing membership and to changes in the world of atomic energy, ensuring greater equality and better representation. We encourage all member States that have not yet done so to take all necessary measures to quickly ratify the amendment. With those remarks, we affirm our strong support for the work of the Agency, as well as the draft resolution "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", of which the Republic of Korea is glad to be a sponsor.

Mr. Syrymbet (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan acknowledges with appreciation the report for 2022 (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), detailing the Agency's significant achievements and additional information on its innovative developments and activities in 2023. The IAEA's increasingly evolving and effective safeguards to ensure the nuclear-non-proliferation regime are particularly significant.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the IAEA is noteworthy. We recognize the Agency's important contribution to some key United Nations policies and programmes to combat poverty and climate change, enhance human health and well-being and protect the environment. The Agency also plays a particularly indispensable role in assisting developing countries in the field of nuclear safety, verification and security and ensuring that they benefit from the advancement and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses through technology transfer. We therefore wholeheartedly supported the Agency's proposed project for the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank, which was established in 2017 in Kazakhstan

and became operational in 2019. Together with IAEA experts, Kazakhstan successfully implemented the first re-certification campaign of low-enriched uranium cylinders in June this year. The Low Enriched Uranium Bank is part of global efforts to create an assured supply of nuclear fuel to countries in the event of a disruption of the open market or other existing supply arrangements for low-enriched uranium.

My delegation takes note of the reference to the IAEA General Conference's adoption at its sixty-seventh session of a resolution entitled "Restoration of the sovereign equality of member States in the IAEA", which was initiated by Kazakhstan and co-sponsored by 56 member States from all eight geographic areas. It therefore enjoys cross-regional support. We firmly believe that a fundamental shortcoming linked to the principle of regional participation needs urgent action, given that the sovereign rights of IAEA member States are gravely violated by virtue of their exclusion. Kazakhstan strongly believes that all member States that fulfil their obligations must be able to exercise their legitimate right to fully participate in the Agency's decision-making processes. The resolution adopted at the General Conference is a first significant step forward in our continuing efforts to restore sovereign equality in the Agency, and it paves the way for meaningful discussions on finally allocating the 17 so-called homeless States to the relevant geographic areas as soon as possible. Based on the preference of each homeless State, the established group of area-less member States, under the chairmanship of Slovenia, has already commenced consultations with regional groups to seek a middle ground on that long-standing issue. We believe the group will soon arrive at tangible results that correspond to the sovereign equality of all States members of the Agency. We urge that the issue be resolved as soon as possible so that all members can equally and fully contribute to the work of the Agency. We also want to encourage member States to ensure the entry into force of the amendment to article VI of the IAEA Statute.

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan will continue its fruitful cooperation with the IAEA and support its flagship initiatives with multiplier effects for member States' ability to attain the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on our updated Technical Cooperation Programme country framework, we will ensure closer interaction between Kazakhstan and the IAEA in areas related to the development of nuclear power

infrastructure. We will also collaborate on advances in nuclear and radiation safety, food security and nuclear medicine, and we affirm our readiness to accelerate effective collaboration through the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action, Rays of Hope, Atoms4NetZero and other central initiatives of the Agency.

Kazakhstan fully supports and endorses draft resolution A/78/L.7, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", and will further promote the IAEA's mandate to ensure progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Mr. Eremin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation considers the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) a top priority. It is an important instrument of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of the atom and a unique mechanism for monitoring States' implementation of their obligations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation.

Our country's cooperation with the IAEA Secretariat in Vienna on issues of fundamental importance to us, including ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities on the territory of the Russian Federation, is highly commendable.

We consider the IAEA safeguards system, which is the mechanism used to monitor compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be the most important element of maintaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is vital to maintain the objective and technically sound nature of the Agency's verification mechanism, while basing it on agreements it concludes with States. Upholding the trust of IAEA member States in the safeguards system requires an appropriate level of transparency, as well as a politically unbiased approach to both the actual implementation of safeguards and the conclusions drawn from verification activities.

The Russian Federation advocates for broad access to the benefits of the peaceful atom for all States that comply with their obligations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as for developing international cooperation in that area. We note the work of the IAEA to promote nuclear power, including in the context of combating climate change. We support the universalization of key international legal instruments in that area, particularly the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment. Russia will continue to assist the Agency and contribute

to the IAEA's programme of activities in the field of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transportation of nuclear and radioactive materials, safe radioactive waste management and emergency preparedness and response. We continue to firmly support the activities of the IAEA in the promotion of nuclear technologies and their application in various areas of human activity. We note the new initiatives that the Director General has launched in that regard and that are designed to contribute positively to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

We believe the Agency's work should be carried out in strict compliance with its statutory functions. It is important for it to refrain from the artificial introduction of issues beyond the scope of the IAEA's Statute into the agenda of its decision-making bodies and its activities in general. Given the Agency's extremely important role, we emphasize how vital it is that its members treat the institution with care. In a turbulent geopolitical context, States parties should do their utmost to ensure that the IAEA's activities are not politicized and are carried out strictly in accordance with its mandate. In some cases, however, we are seeing the exact opposite. That applies particularly to the resolution entitled "Nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine", adopted on 28 September at the sixty-seventh session of the IAEA General Conference, under pressure from the United States and its allies. It includes unfounded and groundless accusations against Russia and is clearly intended to be a tool to put pressure on our country. We thank all the IAEA member States that showed sense and refrained from supporting the resolution. There were considerably more of them than those that voted in favour, emphasizing that a clear majority of the General Conference participants do not accept any politicization of the IAEA's work or its involvement in serving the interests of the West. In that regard, the Russian Federation dissociates itself from the consensus on paragraph 2 of the report of the IAEA (A/78/304), which takes note of the resolution I just mentioned on safeguards in Ukraine. It is a gross distortion of reality and exceeds the Agency's authority under its Statute.

I would also like to recall the reservation we expressed in connection with the adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference of the Agency's annual report for 2022, regarding the unacceptability for Russia of every provision of the annual report, its annexes and other Agency documents

that ignores the fact that the nuclear facilities in Sevastopol, as well as off-site locations on the Crimean peninsula, in the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, are located on Russian Federation territory and under its jurisdiction. Those facilities are included in the list of Russian installations where IAEA safeguards can be applied, and the Russian Federation is ready to provide access to them on request. They have nothing to do with the application of safeguards in Ukraine. I also want to point out that as a result of their referendums, the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions have become new constituent entities of the Russian Federation. That was based on the expression of the will of the residents of those regions and in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates the right of nations to self-determination. Unfortunately, as today's meeting shows, a number of delegations are determined to prevent a constructive discussion of the agenda item and to politicize the debate.

In October 2022 the President of Russia signed a decree on the specifics of legal regulation regarding the use of atomic energy in the territory of the Zaporizhzhya region, and units of Russia's National Guard have continued to protect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in accordance with it. I would like to stress that we have never carried out attacks from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The accusations of the deployment of heavy weapons at the plant are unfounded. The IAEA inspectors who have been permanently deployed at the plant can see that for themselves. Safeguarding the plant is especially critical considering the ongoing provocations around it.

The main threat to the security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is the Armed Forces of Ukraine's ongoing shelling and sabotage attempts. It will be vital to ensure that those attacks on the plant are completely stopped, because the risk of a human-made disaster there remains high. As the IAEA has confirmed, attacks on the plant threaten its physical security and integrity. The Armed Forces of Ukraine continue to target the plant's most vulnerable areas, deliberately creating the risk of a large-scale radiological accident. We have been regularly circulating information on those incidents as official documents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and we urge all delegations to take them into account in drawing their own conclusions.

We should point out that such reckless actions by Ukraine have unfortunately gone on for more than a year. Against that backdrop, Russia is doing everything in its power to ensure the effective and safe work of the IAEA mission at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Our country has ensured the secure rotation of the Agency's personnel at the site, despite the obstacles and provocations created by the Kyiv regime. It is important for employees of the IAEA secretariat to be present at all times at the plant, monitoring the situation and reporting promptly on it to Vienna. We are willing to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the secretariat so that its experts can conduct their work at the power plant. However, the presence of experts from the international organization has not deterred Ukraine, and the shelling from the Ukrainian side has continued. In particular, on 3 November, during the scheduled rotation of IAEA experts at the plant, Ukraine once again violated the ceasefire and launched a drone attack on the town of Enerhodar, which is located near the plant.

Western delegations refuse to call a spade a spade and acknowledge that the Kyiv regime has turned the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant into a target to use as nuclear blackmail. Moreover, the Ukrainian side has gone even further and has launched provocative attacks on other Russian nuclear facilities. For example, on 26 October, Kyiv attacked the Kursk nuclear power plant with drones. We consider such actions by the Ukrainian side as yet another reckless venture with unpredictable consequences.

To conclude, I want to once again underscore that the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and Crimea are integral parts of the Russian Federation. It is not only our right but our direct responsibility to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities on those territories, and we will continue to do everything necessary to that end. We call on the Western sponsors of the Kyiv regime to stop indulging its reckless adventurism. They will be held accountable for all the potential consequences.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): My delegation concurs with the view of Mr. Grossi, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), that the IAEA is a formidable institution that deals with issues of war, peace, human health, energy, food and water, all of which are fundamental concerns of all human beings. Director General Grossi and his team should be congratulated on facilitating the peaceful application of

nuclear technologies in various sectors, including health care, agriculture and energy production. We also note that through its Technical Cooperation Programme the Agency has assisted developing countries in harnessing nuclear technology for socioeconomic development, improving health-care services, enhancing agricultural production and enabling greater access to clean and sustainable energy sources.

It is noteworthy that the IAEA has played a critical role in fortifying member States' emergency preparedness and response capabilities. In doing so, it has provided training, guidance and support during nuclear emergencies and has also helped facilitate effective and coordinated international responses, reducing the potential risks and mitigating the consequences of such events. Sri Lanka acknowledges the Agency's dedication, expertise and commitment to fulfilling its mandate. As reflected in the Agency's annual report (see A/78/304), we note with appreciation the significant adaptations it has made in its methods of work to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of its mandate in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and enhancing nuclear safety and security, as well as nuclear verification and safeguards. The Agency's technical cooperation activities are more vital than ever for a developing country like Sri Lanka. Among other things, supporting the IAEA is crucial to ensuring effective nuclear supervision and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, mainly because it plays a vital role in verifying that member States comply with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, the Assembly will appreciate that there are always areas where improvements can be made to ensure greater supervision, and I would like to mention a few.

First, we believe that minimizing the risk of proliferation requires more rigorous inspection, improved technology and increased transparency. Secondly, we feel that coordination with Member States can be improved, along with the provision of timely and accurate information and the facilitation of international cooperation in the case of accidents or other incidents. Thirdly, we ask that the Agency increase the scope of its technical cooperation programmes in assisting Member States, particularly developing countries, in building their nuclear infrastructure and capabilities, by providing more opportunities for training and expertise and the resources to enhance the safety, security and peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

We should offer greater encouragement to promoting universal adherence to international treaties and agreements connected with nuclear energy and non-proliferation, which could include increased diplomatic efforts, advocacy and dialogue with members. We also believe it might be useful to enhance the IAEA's information-sharing among member States by creating a more active and secure platform for sharing data, research and better practices related to nuclear energy, safety and security.

We appreciate the fact that the IAEA relies on voluntary contributions from member States, which can limit its effectiveness. We strongly recommend advocating for increased funding and resources to expand its ability to conduct inspections, provide technical assistance and support member States in implementing nuclear safeguards and security measures. My delegation believes that in collaboration with member States, the IAEA could develop and strengthen legal frameworks relevant to nuclear energy and security in order to help promote the adoption of international conventions, protocols and guidelines providing a clear legal basis for the work of the Agency. It is also recommended that the IAEA enhance its communication and outreach efforts to engage with the public, academia and other stakeholders so that it can foster greater understanding and support of its work. Needless to say, we cannot overstate the importance of the requirement for capacity-building initiatives to help member States develop their own capacities. My delegation therefore believes that training programmes, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing can empower member States to take ownership of their nuclear programmes while at the same time ensuring effective supervision at the national level.

We believe that respect for the right of all States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is very much in keeping with the letter and spirit of realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. We emphasize the importance of building and strengthening capacities in all member States, especially developing States, and appreciate the Agency's assistance in establishing or enhancing the national safety infrastructure of developing countries that are operating, expanding or embarking on nuclear power and radiation technology programmes.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka reiterates that increased support to the IAEA will reinforce its critical role in nuclear supervision, non-proliferation and safety

and security, and would help strengthen our global efforts to ensure the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy. In line with its motto of "Atoms for peace and development", we wish the IAEA every success in supporting countries in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, nine of which engage directly with the issue of nuclear science and technology. Sri Lanka firmly believes in the IAEA's unlimited positive potential through its effective sharing of the benefits of safe and secure applications of nuclear technology, and looks forward to continued meaningful cooperation with it in the coming year.

Mr. Liu Zhao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the statement by Mr. Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/78/PV.29), and we join other countries in congratulating Mr. Grossi on his reappointment.

As the pre-eminent intergovernmental and international organization in the nuclear field, the IAEA plays an irreplaceable role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Over the past year, the Agency has been committed to applying nuclear technologies in areas that include food and agriculture; health care and environmental protection; assisting Member States in maintaining and strengthening their capacities in nuclear safety and security, nuclear emergency response and radioactive waste management, among other things; contributing to the application of safeguards globally and playing a constructive role in ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy and upholding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. With a view to maintaining international peace and security and promoting sustainable development, China takes a strategic view of its relationship with the Agency. We support the role of the IAEA, with which we engage in active and comprehensive cooperation.

In 2022 President Xi launched China's Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative, both of which align with the Agency's vision for atoms for peace and development and are closely linked to the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Previously, China submitted a resolution to the First Committee, adopted by the Assembly as resolution 77/96, entitled "Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security", which highlights the right of all countries, and developing countries in particular, to the peaceful use

of advanced technologies, including nuclear technology, for sustainable development. In that spirit, China supports the series of commendable initiatives that the Director General has launched on nuclear energy and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We support the Agency's active sharing of experiences and expertise with developing countries to help them educate and train specialists and professionals. We support the Agency in providing public goods and taking concrete actions to enhance the sharing of the benefits of nuclear technologies with developing countries.

At present, the complex and challenging international landscape poses multiple challenges to the Agency's work. Disregarding opposition from the international community, Japan recently initiated a third round of its discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima into the ocean. China calls on the Agency to promote the establishment of a long-term international monitoring arrangement with substantive participation by all stakeholders, with a view to effectively preventing the long-term harm to the global marine environment and public health posed by Japan's discharge activities.

Turning to the nuclear submarine deal between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, that arrangement involves the transfer of large amounts of weapons-grade nuclear materials. It also involves areas and practices that are new to the Agency's safeguards system, posing serious challenges to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the safeguards system itself. China calls for adherence to the Agency's tradition of inclusive discussions and consensus on the issue of safeguards. We will continue to advocate and promote members' participation in intergovernmental discussions.

With regard to hotspot nuclear issues, China supports the Agency's adherence to objectivity and impartiality in conducting verification and monitoring, in line with its mandate. The Agency should play its due role in addressing the nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula and in Iran, among other regional hotspots. China encourages the Agency to strengthen cooperation with Iran, with both sides meeting each other halfway, to promote timely solutions to outstanding issues related to safeguards and monitoring and create a positive atmosphere that is conducive for the parties concerned to return to full compliance with the relevant agreements.

Looking ahead, China stands ready to continue strengthening its exchanges and cooperation with the Agency and making additional contributions to world peace and development and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. At the same time, we also hope that the Director General and the Agency's secretariat will fully appreciate and give serious attention to the various views and concerns of Member States on major and sensitive issues that affect their common interests by encouraging in-depth discussions among all parties. The aim is to forge and broaden consensus with a view to strengthening support to the secretariat in discharging its mandate in an independent and objective manner, informed by science and in compliance with the Statute.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): My delegation thanks the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its comprehensive annual report (see A/78/304), and I would like to commend the Agency for completing an impressive work plan. As a member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA for the 2021–2023 term, Viet Nam enjoyed excellent cooperation with the Agency and other Board members in fulfilling the Agency's mandate. Allow me to briefly comment on the Agency's work in three areas.

First, regarding nuclear verification, we note with satisfaction that the Agency was able to draw sound conclusions for all States where the Agency implemented safeguards in 2022. We welcome the Agency's measures to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of safeguards, including the improved application of information technology to support the development of State-level approaches. In that connection, I would like to underscore the leading and indispensable role that the Agency plays in providing technical assistance and guidelines to member States and the importance of international cooperation and adequate, well-resourced assistance among member States in the overall improvement of their implementation of safeguards. As a beneficiary of that cooperation, Viet Nam has developed the Vietnamese Information Management System with partners in order to facilitate nuclear facilities and off-site facilities in Viet Nam in submitting their reports online, which will help to simplify the processes for verification and reporting development.

Secondly, Viet Nam shares the view that the Technical Cooperation Programme is the primary vehicle for delivering the Agency's main function under its Statute. We were pleased to note that the

financial implementation of the Technical Cooperation Fund reached 84.4 per cent in 2022, with a focus on flagship initiatives such as the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative, the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution programme and Rays of Hope, along with many ongoing projects focused on supporting monitoring, mitigation and adaptation efforts for climate change. We thank the IAEA for helping Viet Nam with technical cooperation projects to implement its new research reactor project and in the application of nuclear energy in health care, agriculture, industry, research, environmental protection, water resources and nuclear safety infrastructure development, among other areas. Viet Nam has an operating nuclear research reactor located in Da Lat that is subject to the IAEA's most rigorous safety standards and has played a pivotal role in cutting-edge scientific research and the production of essential radiopharmaceuticals, making significant contributions in the area of health care.

Thirdly, in the area of emerging nuclear-power technologies, small modular reactors (SMR) and floating nuclear power plants offer enormous potential for helping countries realize their climate goals. The IAEA sees such reactors as playing a key role in countries' transition to clean energy. Viet Nam welcomed the launch of a web portal for the SMR platform to enable information exchange, outreach and networking among relevant stakeholders. At the same time, these nuclear technologies pose potential challenges to existing legal frameworks, as well as having possible security, safety and marine impacts. The development, deployment and operation of such novel nuclear-power technologies must be in line with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and related regulations and standards on nuclear safety and security. As a member of the Board of Governors, we have advocated for a conscious and gradual approach under the auspices of the IAEA to the research, development, licensing, management and operation of floating nuclear power plants, in close consultation with the countries concerned.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm Viet Nam's full support to the IAEA in implementing its mandate and contributing to the enhancement of nuclear science and technology for peace, stability, cooperation and sustainable development.

Mr. Al Rubkhi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to congratulate Mr. Rafael Grossi on his reappointment as Director General of the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to express our appreciation for his efforts to strengthen the Agency's important role and develop its working mechanisms in a way that meets the expectations of member States and achieves the noble objectives for which it was established, which will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the pillars of security, stability and peace. We also appreciate the Agency's annual report for 2022 (see A/78/304).

My country, the Sultanate of Oman, attaches particular importance to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies in enabling it to meet its current and future needs in the field of sustainable development. We are also aware of the importance of training young people in the concepts of science, technology and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in schools, colleges and universities. That is why the Sultanate of Oman has participated in the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme in the field of teaching nuclear science and technology since its inception in 2019. Oman has also played an effective and tangible role in organizing the International Nuclear Science Olympiad, which will be held in Manila in August 2024, supported by the IAEA and other national institutions, together with regional and international organizations. It is a very fruitful international initiative that my country participates in and supports because of its expected positive impact on the lives of many communities around the world.

This year we launched the implementation of our technical cooperation project with the IAEA with a view to developing a coordinated and integrated programme for monitoring and controlling viral diseases in animals and human beings with a strategy to implement it. Through the programme, we hope we will be able to develop an integrated network of experts and researchers specialized in those areas. We note in that regard that we look forward to seeing all the technical cooperation projects that are currently in place implemented, including projects that were introduced and discussed for the period 2024–2025, because they all aim to build the capacity of States, including Oman, to improve agricultural pest control, ensure food safety and quality in radiological medical practices and strengthen radiation safety infrastructure.

Oman took part in the joint eighth and ninth Review Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held in Vienna from 20 to 31 March, during which my country submitted our third national report in the context of the Convention. We are also

keen to take an effective part in the working group that the contracting parties have decided to establish in order to improve and promote the effectiveness of the review process. We look forward to simplifying and integrating the procedures to make them more available to States parties.

I would also like to reiterate my country's position in support of strengthening nuclear security, based on our belief that global nuclear security is the responsibility of every country, with no exceptions. I note in that regard that in 2022 Oman joined the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, which concerns the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as part of the existing cooperation between the European and Gulf parties.

Nuclear response and non-proliferation mechanisms are part of the IAEA's mandated duties, as well as a necessary commitment to addressing nuclear risks that may threaten global security and stability, including that of the Middle East. My country therefore condemns irresponsible statements about the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons made by any party in any circumstances. We stress the importance of dealing with such statements effectively, concretely and transparently through mechanisms for international action, including those under the supervision of the IAEA, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the nuclear non-proliferation regime, with a view to ensuring the universality of the non-proliferation regime and implementing the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We would also like to take this opportunity to note that the only way to counter the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination in an internationally verifiable manner under the supervision of the IAEA.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm Oman's full support for the success of efforts aimed at implementing decision 73/546, of 2018, which provides for the continued convening of annual conferences on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, through the active participation of all States that sponsored the 1995 resolution, including all the States of the region and the IAEA, in order to formulate a legally binding treaty establishing a zone free of nuclear

weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your exemplary management of our meeting. We also want to express our appreciation to Ambassador Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for his presentation of the Agency's annual report (see A/78/304) and to acknowledge the efforts of the Agency's secretariat in preparing the report. It offers a comprehensive overview of the Agency's activities and achievements in such key areas as nuclear technology, technical cooperation and nuclear security and safety, as well as safeguards. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Director General on his reappointment to a second term leading our Agency. Algeria reaffirms its support and cooperation for his continued tenure.

Algeria reiterates its commitment to the Agency's mission, as outlined in its Statute, and emphasizes the importance of striking a balance among the three pillars of its mandate. Algeria attaches great significance to the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and values the Agency's role in ensuring the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology. We especially appreciate the Technical Cooperation Programme, which is instrumental in assisting member States with their development priorities and management of nuclear knowledge.

Algeria underscores the pivotal role of nuclear technologies in various sectors, including health, agriculture, water resources and the environment. We support the Director General's initiatives such as Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action, Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution and Rays of Hope, which aims to strengthen the capabilities of member States, particularly developing countries, in radiology and addressing shortages of equipment. We also support the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories project, aimed at renovating the Seibersdorf laboratories, which will contribute to member States' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Algeria commends the successful implementation of its 2022–2023 Technical Cooperation Programme, in alignment with our national priorities. Algeria has established a national authority for nuclear safety and security, and we have continued to enhance our

legislative and regulatory framework in that area. We recognize the significance of nuclear energy as a reliable alternative to fossil fuels and its potential to address demand for electricity and mitigate climate change.

In the region, Algeria is pleased with the Agency's attention to Africa and reaffirms its commitment to the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology. We actively participate in regional activities and support initiatives by the African Commission on Nuclear Energy. In that context, we have initiated training programmes for African participants, with plans for more specialized academic training. Algeria is committed to fostering cooperation among African nations in the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

In conclusion, Algeria emphasizes the importance of the Agency's verification system within the nuclear non-proliferation regime and places full trust in the Agency's competence in inspection-related tasks. We acknowledge the progress made in strengthening and improving the safeguards system and encourage the Agency to continue those efforts in line with its Statute and the relevant resolutions of its General Conference. We want to renew our support for the Agency's authority in that regard and advocate for the global expansion of the safeguards system as a potent tool for nuclear non-proliferation, especially in the Middle East.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on this agenda item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.7, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Sharma (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/78/L.7: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico,

Monaco, Mongolia, Namibia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.7, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.7?

Draft resolution A/78/L.7 was adopted (resolution 78/8).

The Acting President: The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kalmar (Israel): I am compelled to take the floor regarding references concerning my country made earlier by the representatives of Iran and Syria.

Iran is in no moral position to lecture or preach about nuclear threats. Iran, in itself, is accountable for the mistrust in the Middle East arms control architecture and has violated its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as boldly presented by the IAEA over and over again. Its track record throughout the years is well known. It lies and hides its true intentions.

Let us recall that just a few weeks ago, the IAEA stated clearly that Iran's manipulations and de-designation of experienced Agency inspectors negatively affects verification activities in Iran under the NPT safeguards agreement. Make no mistake — Iran will do whatever it can to deceitfully wash away its crimes and will use false accusations against Israel to shift attention.

Furthermore, I would like to remind all delegations here that Iran is the world's primary terrorism-sponsoring State and the world's biggest proliferator of small arms and light weapons, heavy weapons,

rockets, missiles and other related technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicle systems. All of that is done in the name of promoting its radical agenda and destabilizing the entire Middle East and beyond.

Iran's ongoing support of Hamas, a barbaric and genocidal terror organization, was the backbone of the 7 October massacre against the people of Israel. Over the years, Iran funded and trained Hamas to kill and kidnap innocent Israelis, all in its quest to annihilate Israel. While Israel is in grief, the regime in Tehran is celebrating the murder of 1,400 Israelis and the kidnapping of more than 240 people.

Syria, for its part, has yet to answer open questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency with regard to its clandestine nuclear programme. The country also violates its commitments to the NPT and its safeguards agreement. The existence of undeclared nuclear activities in Syria remains relevant and worrisome, as do the open questions related to the nature and operational status of the specific sites and materials within Syria.

Syria has also used chemical weapons against its own population, killing hundreds of women and children. It is vital that the international community remain vigilant in dealing with the challenge of Syria's non-compliance in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. The international community must also continue to investigate Syria's current capabilities and activity with regard to its chemical weapons programme.

Syria, just like Iran, is in no moral position to preach or give lectures on moral conduct.

Mrs. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In response to the statement delivered by the representative of Lithuania, we would like to say that addressing nuclear safety and security requires every Government to make daily efforts. Furthermore, it requires constructive, focused cooperation in relevant international forums.

Since the beginning of the implementation of our national nuclear energy and power programme, Belarus has remained committed to the highest standards of nuclear and radiological safety. We have worked in full transparency and are open to constructive expert dialogue with all interested parties.

One of the main lessons we have learned is that nuclear security knows no borders. The importance

of ensuring nuclear security does not depend on where nuclear facilities are located. Having said that, excessive focus on nuclear security, which is done for show, especially by neighbouring countries, which have decided not to pursue nuclear power, often conceals certain political and economic motives, which are not necessarily laudable. Belarus regularly participates in various review events and conferences under international conventions geared towards ensuring nuclear safety. Furthermore, we are working very actively with interested parties at the regional level.

In a similar vein, like nuclear power plants in countries in the European Union, we have conducted voluntary stress tests of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. Those tests have also been verified by our partners. Our readiness to cooperate with our Lithuanian partners on the operation of the Belarusian nuclear power plant are well known to Vilnius. We call on all parties to avoid using the rostrum of the General Assembly or the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to draw political attention to practical aspects of bilateral relations. We invite our colleagues to use bilateral channels instead.

We would like to reiterate that Belarus is very interested in establishing direct channels of communication between relevant competent authorities and organizations.

Mr. Eremin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to respond to the statement made by the representative of Australia in connection with Russia's actions under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Russia has always been strictly and consistently guided by the tenet of the inadmissibility of nuclear war, which has no winners and should never be unleashed. We call on the other countries of the five nuclear Powers to demonstrate in practice their willingness to work to resolve this priority issue and to refrain from dangerous attempts to infringe on one another's vital interests by encouraging provocations involving weapons of mass destruction. So far, unfortunately, we have seen the exact opposite. The United States is stubbornly unwilling to be reconciled to the loss of its global dominance. In its efforts to resist that objective and inevitable process, it resorts to any means to destabilize nuclear security, creating extremely serious strategic risks. First and foremost among them are its nuclear weapons that it has deployed at six military sites in five countries on the European continent. I believe there is no need to ask

who those weapons, deployed thousands of kilometres from American territory, are directed against.

Russia has been compelled to take strategic steps with a view to evening or reducing the existing imbalances. Our decision to revoke our ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should be seen in this context. On 3 November, the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations sent a note to that effect from Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addressed to Secretary-General António Guterres. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature 27 years ago and was developed at a time when there was still hope of reducing the level of military-political confrontation. Russia ratified the Treaty in 2000, expecting that all States with significant nuclear capabilities would do the same, leading to the Treaty's entry into force. However, that has not happened, because for almost a quarter of a century Washington has been making far-fetched excuses to avoid ratifying it. In other words, it is holding on to the option of carrying out a nuclear test if it wants. At the same time, the United States is keeping its test sites in a state of heightened readiness against a backdrop of the deeply hostile policies it has adopted towards our country.

Russia remains a signatory to the CTBT with all the rights and obligations that entails, and we will continue to participate in the work of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization. We intend to continue to observe the moratorium on nuclear testing. However, our American partners must understand that in the current circumstances, we have the right and the obligation to mirror the actions of the United States. At the same time, I would like to underscore that Russia does not intend to be the first to conduct a nuclear test, but if the United States does it, we will too.

Mr. Kusano (Japan): Our delegation is compelled to exercise the right of reply in response to some baseless and unacceptable statements by the Chinese delegation regarding our Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS)-treated water. The Government of Japan and the operator, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, with the involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), are conducting monitoring, and no anomalies have been detected. The IAEA has confirmed that the level of tritium in the discharged water remains below its standard limit. Japan will continue to provide necessary information, including the results of monitoring, to the international

community in a timely and transparent manner, and will continue its efforts to gain further understanding from the international community regarding the handling of the ALPS-treated water.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): Our delegation feel compelled to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation regarding the so-called referendums that he mentioned. The referendums held in Crimea and in various regions of Ukraine — Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk and Donetsk — have not been recognized by the international community. They were merely a propaganda performance that Russia claimed to be referendums. The performance had nothing to do with the expression of the people's will and has no implications for Ukraine's administrative territorial system and internationally recognized borders. Ukraine and the international community have condemned those actions by Russia and consider them null and void. The Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, like Ukrainian Crimea, remain sovereign territories of Ukraine. We have every right to restore our territorial integrity through military and diplomatic means, and we will continue to liberate the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

With regard to the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, it should be mentioned that the root cause of the challenges and risks to the nuclear safety and security of Ukraine is Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the presence of its military and unauthorized civilian personnel at the Zaporizhzhya power plant. The Board of Governors and General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency therefore adopted resolutions that call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military personnel, equipment and unauthorized civilian personnel from the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to return the control of the plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

Mr. Ghorbanpour Najafabadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am exercising our right of reply to address the fictitious allegations made by the representative of the Israeli regime against my country. First and foremost, I firmly reject them.

The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its heartfelt condolences to the suffering people of Palestine and its firm solidarity with them. We strongly condemn

the grave atrocities committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza, which have led to the deaths of more than 10,000 people so far, nearly 4,000 of them children. That bloodshed and indiscriminate bombing must be stopped immediately and humanitarian aid must be delivered without hindrance. We strongly condemn the Israeli regime's use of prohibited weapons, such as those using phosphorus, and its continued atrocities against Palestinians, and we are deeply concerned about its possible deployment of chemical weapons in Gaza.

As for the specific agenda of the General Assembly today, it is regrettable that a regime that is not a party to any of the relevant international treaties and conventions would allow itself to comment on the States parties to those treaties. The representative of the Israeli regime must know that its hideous and hypocritical positions will get it nowhere. A regime that has twice threatened Iran with nuclear annihilation — once in 2018 and again in September during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, expressed at its highest level, that is, its Prime Minister (see A/78/PV.10) — has no standing, let alone a right, to point fingers at us and make unfounded allegations.

Its baseless references to Iran cannot distract the international community from the daily crimes being committed in Palestine, of which the regime is the sole perpetrator. We strongly condemn its current threat to use nuclear weapons against Gaza and call on the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency to fulfil their responsibilities impartially and objectively and to hold the regime accountable for its persistent practice of threatening to use nuclear weapons.

The Israeli regime's actions in the field of armaments are alarming, with its accumulation of sophisticated conventional weapons, development and stockpiling of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and clandestine nuclear activities in unsafeguarded facilities. The regime refuses to join the legally binding international agreements banning weapons of mass destruction and obstructs efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as Iran proposed in 1974. It is high time to stop such lawlessness.

On another note, I want to strongly reject the statement about my country made earlier today by the representative of the European Union (see A/78/PV.29). I reiterate Iran's unwavering commitment to fulfilling its obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA) while enjoying its sovereign rights based on their provisions, including the admission of inspectors, as well as the level of voluntary undertakings. We urge those who have collectively or individually expressed unacceptable statements on Iran's peaceful nuclear programme and the JCPOA to reconsider their biased positions. It is essential that they acknowledge the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and its overweening approach in imposing sanctions on Iran and its collaborators related to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

Mr. Al Ashkar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation categorically rejects what has been said by the representative of Israel about my country, Syria.

It seems that the representative of the Israeli entity does not know the bloody history of the entity that he represents. The Israeli entity was the first to use biological and chemical weapons in the Middle East, and it is reminding us of its criminal acts today through its use of internationally prohibited weapons, including white phosphorus and napalm, in the three weeks since its continuing aggression against the Palestinian people began.

The representative of Israel is not in a position to give lessons about compliance with international legal obligations. His entity is the only one in the Middle East that possesses a huge arsenal of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction that are not subject to any international monitoring mechanism. All the conferences and meetings on weapons of mass destruction that have been convened in Vienna, New York and The Hague, including the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have revealed the extent to which Israel has disregarded every relevant convention and international resolution on weapons of mass destruction, just as it has ignored for decades the calls from the international community asking it to join non-proliferation and disarmament agreements.

We completely reject the accusations in the statement by the representative of the Israeli entity, which lacks any credibility in that regard and is hostile to Syria and has occupied its land. We all know that making such accusations is an Israeli tactic to deflect attention from the dangers of Israel's nuclear weapons and from the fact that it does not abide by the relevant international resolutions. The question we

should be asking it is why it has refused to respond to the International Atomic Energy Agency or cooperate with it regarding the kind of ammunition it used in its aggression against Syria in 2007.

Not only does the Israeli entity possess nuclear weapons, but it has threatened to use them many times, most recently only two days ago. Its behaviour reveals its true extremist character and the danger posed to the region and the world by the weapons of mass destruction that it possesses. Security and stability in our region will continue to be threatened as long as the occupation entity remains outside the NPT. It is Israel that violates the sovereignty of other States, supports terrorism, protects terrorists and continues to occupy Arab territories and is the main reason for the instability in our region.

Mr. Rosinas (Lithuania): I feel compelled to exercise my right of reply in response to the reply by the representative of Belarus with regard to the Belarusian nuclear power plant.

This meeting on the agenda item currently under consideration — the report (see A/78/304) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — is the most appropriate forum in which to raise awareness among the international community of the situation regarding Belarus's nuclear power plants, whose operations have not only national and regional but broader implications where safety and security are concerned. We are deeply troubled by the evident absence of a culture of safety and by a deficit of transparency and openness. As I stated earlier, we are also troubled by the fact that a week ago, Belarus started its commercial and industrial operation of unit 2 of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, despite the presence of unresolved nuclear safety issues. I will have to be a little more practical and technical in what I am about to say, but I think it is necessary in view of the question that was raised by the representative of Belarus. Since the Belarusian project was launched, Belarus has not provided us — its neighbour Lithuania — with at least two important pieces of information.

First, it has not informed us how it selected the site for the construction of the nuclear power plant in Astravets. Secondly, it has not informed us whether or how it assessed the distribution and density of its

neighbour's population in the adjacent territory. That is critical to Lithuania's nuclear safety concerns. Such an assessment, in line with the IAEA's safety standards, is essential for Lithuania's emergency preparedness, given the fact that any radiological incident at the Belarusian nuclear power plant could affect approximately one third of the Lithuanian population.

There are additional questions related to the stress tests that the representative of Belarus referred to. But while stress tests were indeed conducted, the recommendations were implemented only in part. For example, there were no recommendations implemented with regard to the enhancement of accident management, the emergency ventilation system or the protection of the buildings, including instructions on how to deal with an influx of water. Safety concerns relating to the resistance of the nuclear power plant's equipment to seismic events or the potential impact of a large civilian aircraft crash, as well as unresolved issues involving safety assessments, also remain unaddressed. Furthermore, the licensing experiences of other countries involving nuclear safety regulators have not been assessed, nor have the corresponding safety enhancements been put in place.

The last set of practical and pragmatic issues that I would like to mention in this regard is that Lithuania has in fact consistently called on Belarus to comply with its obligations under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, which refers to the environmental impact assessment in a cross-border context regarding the location of storage facilities for radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel in Belarus. In a nutshell, by pursuing an unsafe nuclear power project, Belarus has continued to ignore the international community's requests to first address all safety concerns. We have therefore repeatedly urged for suspending the operation of the Belarusian nuclear power plant until all safety issues have been comprehensively addressed.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 89?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.