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Official Records

President: Mr. Körösi (Hungary)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Araba (Benin),
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

**Notes by the Secretary-General transmitting
the report of the International Atomic Energy
Agency (A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1)**

Draft resolution (A/77/L.9)

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union (see A/77/PV.31). I wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Slovenia supports draft resolution A/77/L.9, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As one of the 32 States with a fully fledged nuclear programme, Slovenia has always relied on the important work of the IAEA pertaining to nuclear safety and security. We also contribute to the important work of the Agency through our activities as a member of the Board of Governors and will continue to do so in the future. The role of the IAEA is indispensable in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and technology transfers to developing countries, as well as nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

With regard to nuclear safety, we are deeply concerned about Russia's war on Ukraine, which has had significant ramifications for global nuclear safety and security. Slovenia condemns in the strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. We fully support Director General Grossi's efforts to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Slovenia regrets that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) did not conclude with the adoption of an outcome document. Nonetheless, the legally binding obligations of the NPT and commitments from the past Review Conferences remain valid. In that regard, the IAEA safeguards system is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT.

We welcome regular updates of the IAEA's verification and monitoring activities with regard to Iran's nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In addition, Iran still has to respond to the call of the Board of Governors, which in June urged Iran to cooperate in full with the IAEA, without any further delay or conditionality, in order to resolve all pending safeguards issues in accordance with its legally binding obligations under its NPT Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

Slovenia expresses deep concern over the nuclear and ballistic missile activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on that country to take

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concrete, verified action towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, comply with its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and refrain from nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in a meaningful dialogue to prevent escalation and strengthen sustainable peace and security.

Slovenia commends the transparent manner in which Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) have approached the potential acquisition of conventionally armed and nuclear-powered submarines by Australia. We expect that AUKUS partners will continue to pursue their goals together with the IAEA secretariat and in full respect of their international obligations.

Finally, as a country benefiting from nuclear energy, we deeply appreciate the Agency's work in the area of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. We promote sustainable development through our support for the activities of the IAEA on a broad range of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including as a clean and reliable energy source. In that regard, Slovenia is delighted to have been able to financially support the renovation of the Seibersdorf Laboratories. At the same time, we welcome the activities of the secretariat in pursuit of gender equality and gender balance. For that reason, Slovenia has provided a donation to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (EU) (see A/77/PV.31). I wish to make the following statement in my national capacity.

I would like to thank Czechia for introducing draft resolution A/77/L.9, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Ireland strongly supports the work of the IAEA and the professional, objective and impartial manner in which it fulfils its mandate of atoms for peace and development. We are very happy to once again co-sponsor the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Nuclear and radiological technologies have an important role to play in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Across areas such as medicine, industry, food and agriculture, the IAEA's activities play a crucial role in supporting States to develop, enhance and share their capacities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. I would like to point

in particular to the Agency's work over many years to assist countries in building their capacity for diagnosis and treatment in the fight against cancer.

The Director General's work to advance gender parity within the Agency, as well as its broader initiative to increase the number of women in the nuclear field through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, are very welcome. That is an important contribution to the objective of strengthening the gender perspective in the nuclear area. Ireland is pleased to have been one of the first supporters of the Fellowship fund.

The sustainable use of nuclear energy must be accompanied by appropriate, strong and effective nuclear safety and security. The IAEA plays an essential part in supporting the implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety and security standards worldwide. Unfortunately, the issue of nuclear safety and security has been highlighted this year by Russia's military action against, and in the vicinity of, civilian nuclear installations in Ukraine. Ireland condemns the actions of the Russian Federation in its illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war in Ukraine, which poses continued threats to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities and their civilian personnel, and impedes the IAEA's safeguards verification activities.

We support the IAEA Director General's promotion of the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security regarding peaceful nuclear facilities and materials in all circumstances, including in situations of armed conflict. The situation at Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is untenable, and its illegal occupation by Russia significantly raises the risk of nuclear accidents or incidents. The ongoing shelling and missile fire around Zaporizhzhya and other Ukrainian nuclear facilities also raises grave concerns. We support calls for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from the entire territory of Ukraine, including those sites. In that regard, and as stated by our EU colleague, we urge agreement as soon as possible on the Director General's proposal to establish a nuclear safety and protection zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Ireland commends the important work of the IAEA and recognizes that its safeguards system is a fundamental component of the non-proliferation regime and plays an essential role in the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT). Ireland strongly supports universal adherence to the additional protocol and considers that the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocol constitute the current verification standard under the NPT.

Ireland is gravely concerned by Iran's continued escalation of its nuclear programme, in some cases with no plausible civilian justification. Those actions are inconsistent with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and raise very serious proliferation risks. Ireland strongly supports the JCPOA and its full restoration. Only full JCPOA implementation and cooperation with the IAEA on monitoring and verification can provide the international community with the necessary assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. In that regard, Ireland also urges Iran to cooperate with the Agency in order to fully clarify and resolve safeguards issues without further delay.

In the context of ongoing challenges to the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, we reaffirm our strongest support for the indispensable work of the IAEA in ensuring that the civil uses of nuclear energy meet the highest safety, security and safeguards standards against nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Salmeen (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Kuwait believes in the important role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in various spheres, most importantly the transfer of knowledge and capacity-building for the optimal implementation of nuclear applications. Accordingly, my country is keen to participate in the annual discussion of the report of the IAEA (A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1). That has been the case for the 58 years since the State of Kuwait joined the Agency. Through its various national institutions, my country continues to cooperate closely with the various departments of the IAEA with a view to benefiting from its programmes and building our capacities and national institutions in order to implement vital projects for achieving social and economic development.

My country underscores the importance of promoting cooperation with all stakeholders in order to advance the concept of atoms for peace and development, especially as the world is facing successive crises that impact energy, the economy and food security, which

require the support of the IAEA for the systems of nuclear security and safety in Member States and the implementation of relevant safeguards.

In the area of nuclear security, our bilateral cooperation is based on an integrated national plan, which in previous years has played an important role in establishing a strong and sustained infrastructure for nuclear security. In early August, the State of Kuwait presented its national report in the context of the eighth and ninth review sessions of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. As evidence of the continued cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the IAEA, I am pleased to announce a national contribution earlier this year of \$200,000 to the last phase of the programme for upgrading the Agency's Seibersdorf Laboratories, so that the overall contribution from the State of Kuwait amounts to \$1.7 million for all the phases since the programme was launched in 2015.

I would like also to note that my country also hosted a number of events last year, both nationally and regionally, in cooperation with the Agency. We support the initiatives of the Agency in various fields, including the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative and the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative. The State of Kuwait looks forward to hosting the first ZODIAC training session, to be held in 2023 for the Asia-Pacific member States, and hosting the mission of an IAEA group of experts on international advisory services in the area of physical prevention. In the context of the programme of action on curing cancer, my country commends the Agency's role in that programme, while noting that the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development contributed €19.6 million to Chad for supporting a programme that fights female cancer in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank.

My country reiterates its commitment to enabling the role of women and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in conformity with the 2035 vision of the State of Kuwait. In that regard, we support the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, which provides grants to increase the number of female participants in the nuclear field, since women are an integral part of society. The State of Kuwait stresses the need to strengthen cooperation mechanisms in the area of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. We also support non-nuclear States in fully enjoying their inalienable right to the peaceful use of atomic energy,

in conformity with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are concerned that the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which constitutes a challenge to international peace and security.

We call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA, return to the full implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and implement and ratify the additional protocol so that the Agency can present credible guarantees related to the absence of any non-declared nuclear material and activity in Iran, while ensuring its status as a non-nuclear State.

We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be committed to international treaties and relevant Security Council resolutions, while completely abandoning its nuclear weapons through a verifiable and irreversible mechanism. In that regard, we reiterate our condemnation of the launching of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which threaten international peace and security.

The State of Kuwait emphasizes its adherence to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in conformity with the resolution of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the outcome of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. My country stresses the importance of Israel joining the NPT and subjecting all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the IAEA, given that Israel is the only State and impediment in the region that is not a party to the Treaty.

While we regret that the NPT Review Conferences of 2015 and 2022 were not able to reach consensus on a final document, we appreciate the efforts of the Arab countries to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The State of Kuwait and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan presided over the first and second sessions, respectively, of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was held in response to decision 73/546. We look forward to participating in the third session, which will be held under the presidency of the brotherly Republic of Lebanon next week, in order to build on the achievements of the first two sessions.

In conclusion, we emphasize the commitment of the State of Kuwait to continuing to participate effectively in supporting the IAEA in order to promote its technical and professional work with a view to realizing the aspirations of Member States, especially those related to promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy for achieving peace, health and prosperity for the entire world.

Mr. Romero Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the presentation of the 2021 annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1) and draft resolution A/77/L.9. We reiterate Cuba's support for the important work of the IAEA and its contribution to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the IAEA's Department of Technical Cooperation for its efforts to meet objectives proposed for country programmes even during the period affected by conditions resulting from the coronavirus disease pandemic. We also want to highlight the performance of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the implementation in the countries of our region of IAEA initiatives aimed at addressing global problems in the fields of health and the environment.

We reject the unilateral coercive measures that contravene article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by restricting international cooperation for the developing countries that are subject to such measures and limiting their access to materials, equipment and technologies for peaceful nuclear activities. We condemn the United States' economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba, which has significantly increased the cost to our country of acquiring equipment and building capacity, and which is holding up our execution of our national projects under the auspices of the IAEA. As an example, the IAEA Secretariat has been dealing with ongoing difficulties in acquiring the scientific equipment approved for projects with our country, owing to the fact that companies from the United States, and even in third countries with the participation of American capital, cannot sell equipment to Cuba.

Cuba has maintained the double certification process of its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol for 15 years, adding to the satisfactory results obtained in the IAEA's inspections in Cuba and the updating of our national plan for implementing nuclear

physical security, in a demonstration of our commitment to the use of nuclear energy for strictly peaceful purposes and the importance we attach to nuclear and radiological safety. This year Cuba presented its second national report at the seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We also presented our first national report on the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We are proud that our country has been recognized for its culture of safety. We want to highlight the work 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 standards on nuclear security, which should be the result of 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 will be vital to continue to ensure its Secretariat's impartial and professional performance. We advocate for respect for the inalienable right of States to develop research, production and uses of 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 an irreversible, transparent and verified manner.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its annual report (A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1) and for providing updates on the Agency's 2022 activities. Bangladesh commends the Agency for its remarkable efforts to conduct its important activities during the reporting period amid multiple challenges, and for the noteworthy dedication and professionalism of its staff. We appreciate the Agency's assistance to 129 countries and territories, including Bangladesh, for coronavirus-disease-related support to strengthen the capacity of their national laboratories to respond to the pandemic. We are happy to support draft resolution A/77/L.9, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Bangladesh strongly believes in the balanced and effective implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We recognize the inalienable right of all States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including in power generation, health care, food and agriculture. Bangladesh acknowledges the indispensable role of the IAEA as the sole competent authority in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology in accordance with its motto of "atoms for peace and development". We support the central role played by the Agency in the implementation of its global verification regime. Today's meeting is an occasion to reflect on its role in supporting Member States in their pursuit of nuclear energy in a safe and secure manner.

We in Bangladesh are constructing our first nuclear power plant with a view to generating safe, environmentally friendly and economically viable electricity, following the highest IAEA standards, in order to support our development efforts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the IAEA for its support in successfully implementing our nuclear energy programme, including by establishing a regulatory framework and developing a radioactive-waste-management system. We look forward to receiving critical peer reviews and new IAEA advisory missions in Bangladesh to ensure the responsible and timely completion of our nuclear power plant. We appreciate the contribution of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme in supporting Member States in the areas of health and nutrition, food and agriculture and the environment to enable them to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the Programme, the Agency has been assisting Bangladesh in human-resource development and capacity-building for the introduction and development of the peaceful use of nuclear techniques in various sectors, including agriculture, livestock and water management. That in turn is contributing to our socioeconomic development.

Bangladesh also supports the application of nuclear technology to address environmental problems. I am happy to inform the Assembly that in 2021, Bangladesh successfully used nitrogen-15 tracing techniques, following the IAEA's comprehensive guidelines, to accurately measure emissions of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas that is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide. We are encouraged to see the Agency's

initiative to collectively address plastic recycling and marine monitoring of microplastics through the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative. We would like to see the Agency scale up its support to developing countries in that regard. We request the Agency to extend its cooperation in the field of sterile insect technique to contain the *Aedes* mosquitoes responsible for spreading dengue fever. We also welcome the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative to strengthen the preparedness and capability of Member States to rapidly detect and respond in a timely way to outbreaks of zoonotic pathogens.

We are also pleased to note that the Director General's call for nuclear energy to be part of our energy mix in response to climate change was generally well received at the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP) in Glasgow last year. We hope that the Agency will continue its meaningful contribution at COP27, to be held in Egypt this month, through its unique science- and evidence-based approach, showing how nuclear technology is vital both in fighting the climate crisis and addressing its consequences. Whether countering non-compliance or gaps in safeguards, the IAEA brings commitment and competence to the tasks at hand. But it is amply clear that the IAEA can continue to excel only if we, the Member States, provide the support it needs. Let me reaffirm Bangladesh's strong commitment to supporting the work of the IAEA for a better world through the application of nuclear science and technologies for peaceful purposes.

Ms. McIntyre (Australia): Australia thanks the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its report (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1) and the Czech Republic for introducing draft resolution A/77/L.9, of which Australia is pleased to be a sponsor.

As a founding member of the IAEA and a long-standing member of the Agency's Board of Governors, Australia strongly supports the Agency's roles — advancing our collective interests in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and safeguarding against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We also support the independence of the Agency and its Director General.

The events of this year have underscored how truly indispensable the work and functions of the IAEA are. I refer, of course, to Russia's unilateral, illegal and immoral aggression against the people of Ukraine,

which Australia condemns in the strongest terms. We also condemn Russia's reckless actions in relation to Ukrainian nuclear facilities and remain gravely concerned about the nuclear safety, security and safeguards implications of those actions. We welcome the IAEA's commitment to monitoring and verifying the peaceful nature of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, even when that commitment comes at the cost of the physical risk and personal sacrifice of its staff. We call on Russia to withdraw from the territory of Ukraine and in turn to allow the Ukrainian authorities to re-establish control over their nuclear sites.

A further grave challenge for the international community this year has been the ongoing development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its illegal and destabilizing nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. Australia condemns those actions and urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not to resume nuclear testing, an escalatory step that would seriously undermine regional peace and security. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea return to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, permit the return of IAEA safeguards inspectors, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Australia continues to support the professional work of the IAEA Director General and IAEA staff as they seek to implement Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran. We note with grave concern that Iran's actions prevent the Agency from providing assurances that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful. We support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and call on Iran to reverse the steps it has taken away from its nuclear commitments under the plan.

While deeply disappointed that the tenth NPT Review Conference did not reach a consensus outcome, we will continue our active engagement in the implementation of the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and we will work to advance its three pillars. Nuclear applications enable us to enhance human health, investigate the origins of disease, support industry and address environmental challenges, including water sustainability, climate change and marine pollution. Amid the ongoing global challenges we face, including the deteriorating security environment that we find ourselves in, it is essential that the IAEA's work on the peaceful uses

of nuclear technology be maintained. Australia was pleased to engage on many of those issues during Director General Grossi's visit to our country in July.

Before I close, let me say that as a member of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear in Vienna, Australia commends the Agency's efforts to increase representation and diversity in the IAEA and strengthen the role of women in the sector.

Mr. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras, a country committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, is pleased to be participating in this meeting on the occasion of the presentation of the 2021 report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1). We recognize the international importance of the IAEA and its commendable work in disseminating and transferring applications and nuclear technology for peaceful uses, with a positive impact on the sustainable development of our planet.

Within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, my country would like to reiterate that we will continue to promote strategic alliances to encourage, galvanize and strengthen our region's IAEA cooperation programme. With the support of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, we are currently implementing four national projects for the 2022–2023 biennium and are part of nine regional projects for the same cycle. That complements the goals of our national development programmes while simultaneously generating synergies with different academic and research bodies in the field. For example, in the health sector, the sterile insect technique is playing a major role in Honduras in the control and eradication of pests and diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, including the mosquito that transmits dengue, Zika and Chikungunya, a so-called hidden pandemic that has claimed thousands of lives in my country. With regard to combating cancer, Honduras is grateful to the IAEA for the ongoing cooperation that is helping us improve our efforts in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment and palliative-care stages of the disease. My country supports the Rays of Hope Initiative to strengthen capacities in cancer treatment.

With the support of the IAEA, we have developed and strengthened our capacities in the field of agriculture and extending to the coffee production sector. According to statistics from the Food and Agriculture

Organization of the United Nations, around 10 million people in Central America are engaged in agricultural activity, and the use of nuclear techniques in our region is therefore becoming vital to ensuring food production in areas severely affected by the negative effects of climate change. My country supports the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action Initiative, which aims to help countries use nuclear and nuclear-based techniques to rapidly detect disease-causing pathogens in animals that are transmissible to humans.

With regard to disarmament, Honduras, as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, recognizes the importance of cooperation in the area of nuclear energy. However, we want to reiterate and put it on record that the three pillars of the Treaty are complementary and indivisible. Likewise, and given its complementarity, my country, as a State party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, urges the countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it with the urgency required to strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We have taken note of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (see A/77/308 and A/77/308 Add.1), and in that regard we trust that the international community will fulfil its obligations within the framework of the Organization in order to guarantee peace and prosperity in the world. We are pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/77/L.9, which was introduced by the Czech Republic. Honduras appreciates the support of the IAEA and welcomes the Secretariat's progress with respect to greater representation and gender equality in the nuclear sphere. Finally, Honduras currently has a new Government, a testimony to the strength of our democracy and our will to make a fairer, safer, more prosperous and equitable country. My country's support for the IAEA is part of that context and of our commitment to a responsible foreign policy and more humanitarian and supportive international cooperation.

Ms. Le Son (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Principality of Monaco aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/77/PV.31).

At the outset, allow me to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for its report (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1).

It is important for my delegation to commend the Agency for its efforts in Ukraine to prevent a nuclear disaster at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. While the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not lead to the adoption of a consensus-based outcome document, despite intense consultations, the role of the IAEA in nuclear non-proliferation, verification, safety and security has increased in importance and scope. We welcome the recent findings of the Agency inspectors' mission to Ukraine, which confirmed the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. The commitment, courage and determination of the teams, which have been deployed in a war zone over the past few months, should be commended. The IAEA's contribution to the objectives of preserving peace and security is also reflected in its actions to promote the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear science and technology.

The IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme contributes directly to the achievement of a number of Sustainable Development Goals through the assistance provided to States in the field of energy, human health, food production, water management and environmental protection. Being particularly sensitive to the efforts of the Agency in those areas, and as the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is being held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the Principality wishes to emphasize the crucial role of data collected using nuclear and isotopic techniques in contributing to a better assessment of the impact of climate change, in particular its impact on the seas and oceans. Those techniques are promoted by the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratories, based in Monaco, in order to assess marine and coastal pollution and identify its source. In that respect, I would like to commend the IAEA's Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative, which aims to provide a better understanding of the volume and impact of plastic pollution in the marine environment and reduce its quantity. That is a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

I cannot end my statement without mentioning another aspect of the work of the IAEA: the peaceful use of nuclear technologies in the service of human health. The Principality of Monaco has long supported the Agency's activities in that area by providing regular funding to the IAEA Programme of Action for Cancer

Therapy initiative. Last September, we made a financial commitment for the period 2022–2023 in order to support the Rays of Hope initiative, which aims to accelerate the creation of radiotherapy in countries that do not have it.

In conclusion, the Principality wishes to express its full confidence in this specialized United Nations Agency and is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/77/L.9, which we will adopt at the end of this meeting.

Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile welcomes with satisfaction the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the year 2021 (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1). We thank Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, the Secretariat and all Agency officials for the hard work carried out during that period.

We recognize the relevance of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting and facilitating research, development and the practical application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, as well as the Agency's work in the fields of health, agriculture and food, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We highlight the technical cooperation that was successfully implemented by the IAEA in response to the global coronavirus disease pandemic. In particular, we emphasize its capacity for adaptation and flexibility in the robust fulfilment of its commitments. We also highlight the transfer of technology to developing countries and all verifications carried out in pursuit of nuclear safety and security. Safeguards inspectors carried out more than 3,000 verification activities during the year 2021. We appreciate the fact that the Organization has been able to reach conclusions for all States in which the Agency applied safeguards.

We acknowledge the collaborative work of the IAEA with specialized national organizations, such as the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission, which has made a commitment to host the meeting of the Technical Coordination Body of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago next year. To illustrate that collaboration, we would like to point out that, in preparation for the integrated review mission to the RECH-1 research reactor in our country that was carried out this year, the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission requested a consultative meeting with the IAEA, which was held

virtually owing to restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). On that occasion, the then-current status of RECH-1 was reviewed, and advice was given on the potential and limitations of its use.

We wish to emphasize that Chile adheres to the principle of the indivisibility of international security, since all States, regardless of their size or power, have the responsibility to contribute to the consolidation of an international order that is based on multilateralism and cooperation and is regulated by international law, including international humanitarian law. Chile firmly believes that the future of nuclear science technology and its applications lies in its use for strictly peaceful purposes. In that regard, we value emblematic Agency projects, such as the Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution initiative, which centres on the management of plastic pollution in the marine environment by means of nuclear technology. That is very useful for the efforts of countries such as Chile. In addition, the participation of the national agricultural health agency in the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative will strengthen national capacities for the detection of zoonotic diseases.

The contribution of women is fundamental in the field of science, technology and nuclear applications, as well as in the activities associated with the tasks of the IAEA. The Agency must guarantee the participation of women at the highest level and strengthen the production and dissemination of updated statistics thereon. The Agency also has an important role in ensuring parity in discussion panels and supporting civil society organizations that bring together women scientists in the nuclear field. We emphasize our conviction that the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme is essential in areas such as capacity-building and training; the strengthening of national infrastructure for radiation safety; human health, with an emphasis on cancer and other pathologies with a high impact on health and quality of life; water resources, marine and coastal environments; and food safety, among other things, all of which are the focus of ongoing relevant technical cooperation projects with the Agency.

Finally, we want to take this opportunity to mention that Chile shares the concern expressed by the Agency's Director General about the nuclear facilities located in Ukraine, and joins the calls to the parties urging for containment and for refraining from actions that could jeopardize the power plants' physical safety and

integrity. We ask for respect for the seven pillars defined by the Agency in order to ensure the technological and physical safety of all nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador is grateful for the convening of this meeting on the presentation of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1), and recognizes the central role that the Agency plays in the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. El Salvador is a sponsor of draft resolution A/77/L.9, presented by the Czech Republic in its capacity as President of the Board of Governors of the IAEA in recognition of the important work of this body. We welcome the annual report of the IAEA for 2021 and acknowledge the important work done by Rafael Mariano Grossi, the Director General of the Agency. In that context, we noted the Agency's dynamic efforts in 2021 to tackle the challenges resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We are pleased that the safeguards system verification activities did not falter, despite the challenges posed at the time by travel restrictions, quarantine provisions and isolation requirements in countries all over the world.

El Salvador participated actively in the latest Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and regrets the final results. However, we reiterate our firm commitment to continuing to work for the balanced implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty and also recognize the IAEA's vital work in implementing the safeguards system, which ensures that countries can exploit the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination and has helped us to advance in our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We also want to reiterate our support for the pillars of nuclear security, which are essential to safeguarding our common security in a context of a high risk of proliferation.

For all of these reasons, El Salvador has concluded its Safeguards Agreement with the Agency, as well as an Additional Protocol and a Protocol on Small Quantities. In our view, the safeguards agreements are an essential and reliable instrument for verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing nuclear proliferation, and we encourage all Member States of the Agency that have not yet concluded such agreements to accept their full application in all their nuclear activities.

My country has long cooperated with the Agency through the Technical Cooperation Fund, as well as through our Ministries of Health, Environment and Agriculture, which have benefited in important areas, particularly agricultural management, radiotherapy treatments and nuclear medicine, water-resource management and radiation safety. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight my country's cooperation with the Agency in some very specific areas. The first is our COVID-19 pandemic response in 2021, for which we received donated diagnosis and detection equipment, including real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain-reaction test detection materials, protective equipment for health-care personnel and biological safety cabinets for the safe handling and analysis of samples.

Secondly, in the area of health care, we want to highlight the improvements we were able to make in the quality of radiological medical treatments through dosimetry services. The Agency provides technical guidance on the safe administration of radiotherapy and certification of medical physicists who ensure the quality of these cancer treatments. El Salvador was subject to 10 audits of this nature for radiotherapy during 2021, ensuring that quality medical assistance was provided in the fight against cancer in accordance with the highest international standards. Thirdly, our country has greatly benefited from technical training courses in regulatory control for radiotherapy practices.

Lastly, I want to mention food production, with a focus on resilience in the face of climate change. The Agency, in coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, has provided assistance to Member States with respect to innovative nuclear technologies to develop new plant varieties. El Salvador, along with other countries in the region, has been part of this initiative.

Through these small examples we want to highlight the relevance of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as the impact that they have on technical training programmes and technology transfers for developing countries like mine. We also emphasize the Agency's relevance in the work it is doing with other agencies and entities in the United Nations system. We want to thank countries that make all of this possible and encourage as many others as possible to join this cause. As my country said at the most recent IAEA General Conference, we are very interested in being part of the Agency's initiative Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All,

which aims to improve national radiological capacities and strengthen resources dedicated to cancer treatment. I should say that all of these points are only a small sample of the work of the IAEA, an organization that El Salvador supports and with which it hopes to continue working closely. I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight and express our gratitude for the valuable work that our Permanent Mission in Vienna is doing to make all of this possible in our country.

Mr. Bandiya (Nigeria): The delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria welcomes the 2021 annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1). We would like to affirm our support for the work of the IAEA and confirm our sponsorship of draft resolution A/77/L.9. My delegation has also taken note of the comments of the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, and appreciates the continuing work that he and his staff have been doing in spite of the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic of 2020. Nigeria particularly appreciates the tangible programmes that the Agency introduced during that period.

Among other things, its mobilization of resources and effective implementation of the Interregional Technical Cooperation Project, INT 0098, through which reverse transcription polymerase chain-reaction test equipment and technical knowledge were provided to more than 128 countries, demonstrate the uses of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques that Member States can benefit from through the Agency. Nigeria also welcomed the take-off of the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative, which is assisting Member States in reducing the risk of the next zoonotic disease becoming another pandemic. The ZODIAC programme is working to appropriately equip and build developing countries' capacities in readiness for future pandemics.

My delegation aligns itself with the theme of building resilience through hope and reiterates its commitment to the work of the IAEA. The report illustrates the work of the Agency in all aspects of its mandate. Nigeria particularly appreciates the value of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the socioeconomic development of countries. We note that in line with the IAEA's mandate and pursuant to article 2 of its statute, the Agency has continued to support Member States in a variety of ways, including cancer control, soil and water management, the detection of zoonotic diseases and power generation. My delegation welcomes the portions

of the annual report detailing the work of the IAEA in delivering support to Member States through the Technical Cooperation Programme, as well as the efforts of the Director General to strengthen the Programme.

The Agency's work in nuclear safety and security, as well as in the areas of safeguards, verification and monitoring, also contributes significantly to international peace, and has Nigeria's full support. We are hopeful that the Agency's projects in Nigeria under the initiatives Developing Safety Infrastructure for Regulating Nuclear Power Plants and Developing Safety Infrastructure for Regulating Non-Power Nuclear and Radiation Applications will enhance the capacity of our staff to regulate power plants. My delegation further hopes that the projects will strengthen Nigeria's national infrastructure for radiation protection, nuclear safety, emergency planning and radioactive waste systems in relation to exploration, mining, the milling of radioactive ores and other ores associated with radioactive material.

The outcome of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which just concluded, further underlines the urgency of the work that the IAEA undertakes to ensure that our planet can remain sustainable, in line with our Sustainable Development Goal commitments.

In conclusion, Nigeria welcomes the report, supports the recommended actions and requests the Secretary-General to continue efforts to strengthen the relationship of the United Nations with the IAEA within the framework of the agreement that governs it.

Mrs. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus fully supports the activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/77/L.9. Today almost all international organizations, including the IAEA, are affected by the growing intersection between acute geopolitical crises and transnational threats. There is a great temptation for many countries to politicize the Agency's work and use it for their own political purposes that have nothing to do with strengthening nuclear safety and security and expanding the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We firmly believe that nothing good can come of that and that political problems should be resolved in the relevant political formats. The IAEA should remain on the sidelines of global politics and be strictly guided by its mandate. It should continue its

role as the main international mechanism for assisting countries of the world in accessing the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy in such areas as energy, food production, health care and climate change.

We are pleased to note that Belarus and the IAEA have been actively developing and expanding their cooperation in connection with the implementation of our national nuclear energy programme. We greatly value the support we have had in the past year in the area of additional professional training of the staff of Belarus's nuclear power plant as well as in other measures for enhancing its operational safety. Belarus's experience testifies to the specific practical use of the Agency's instruments and services aimed at supporting countries in developing their nuclear energy sector. In Belarus, all of the key IAEA missions recommended for countries building their first nuclear power plants have been conducted. Of the three missions carried out last year, two were repeats directly related to issues of nuclear security, and the plans approved as a result have either been fully implemented or are about to be fully implemented. International experts have confirmed this fact as well as Belarus's strict adherence to the maintenance of nuclear and radiation security. I would like to point out that missions recommended for countries that are starting out are no less relevant for countries that have abandoned nuclear power and are beginning to decommission their nuclear plants.

We condemn the calls by some countries for limiting certain States' participation in the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme in various ways. There is no question that such politicized approaches only undermine the effectiveness of the Agency's activities and the foundations of the non-proliferation regime. With regard to international cooperation in the framework of the IAEA, I should point out that Belarus is fulfilling its obligations, including those related to the safety of the Belarus nuclear power plant, while dealing with unprecedented economic sanctions imposed by Western States. Despite the outside pressures, we will continue to fulfil our obligations, but we stress how damaging that approach is to the efforts of any State to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including in the area of nuclear security.

In connection with the comments made by the representative of Lithuania, we would like to say that the accusations about the lack of safety of the Belarus nuclear power plant are unfounded and biased. Belarus is a leader among IAEA member States in the number of

Agency verification missions conducted and requested, the conclusions of which have been published and have repeatedly confirmed our adherence to the highest possible international nuclear safety standards. We urge everyone to refrain from using the General Assembly or the IAEA as a platform for political attention-getting on issues of bilateral relations and instead to make use of bilateral channels. The topic of nuclear and radiation security is a very important long-term aspect of nuclear cooperation between Belarus and Lithuania, not only in the context of our nuclear power plant but also in the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant at the Belarusian border and accompanying projects for handling and burying spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.

In conclusion, we firmly deny that Belarus is a participant in Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. Belarus has consistently supported the peaceful resolution of the conflict by diplomatic means and is doing everything it can to achieve it.

Mr. Kim (Republic of Korea): We thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for this year's annual report (see A/77/308 and A/77/308 Add.1) and the representative of the Czech Republic for introducing draft resolution A/77/L.9, which we were pleased to sponsor.

The IAEA's annual report is a good illustration of the ways in which the Agency's activities contribute to the work of the United Nations in providing solutions to global challenges, including by advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Following its chairmanship of the Board of Governors of the IAEA from September 2021 to September 2022, the Republic of Korea has remained a staunch supporter of the Agency's mandate to promote atoms for peace and development. As a major producer of nuclear energy, we have actively contributed to expanding the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by supporting a number of IAEA Technical Cooperation Programmes, such as the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative and the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We will spare no effort to promote international cooperation aimed at advancing nuclear technologies such as small modular reactors, and we will cooperate with the IAEA in standardizing the design of small modular reactors and developing appropriate regulations.

The Republic of Korea believes that securing the highest standards of nuclear safety and security is a prerequisite for expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear

energy. In that context, we have been one of the main contributors to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund and its activities, such as the establishment of the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre at Seibersdorf. We are gravely concerned about the situation of the nuclear facilities in Ukraine in the context of the war started by the Russian Federation. My Government fully supports the efforts of the Director General and staff of the IAEA to ensure the security and safety of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. To that end, the Republic of Korea has pledged to donate \$1.2 million and will continue to join with the international community in its efforts to support Ukraine.

The IAEA safeguards are central to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We support the IAEA's efforts to universalize the comprehensive safeguards agreements, the additional protocols and the revised small quantities protocols, and we urge every country that has not yet done so to conclude and bring those key instruments into force without delay. It is vital that all countries fully implement their safeguards obligations. In that regard, we look forward to a speedy resolution of all the outstanding safeguards issues related to undeclared locations in Iran and encourage all the parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action negotiations to find a path back to mutual compliance with that milestone agreement.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of a nuclear programme continues to be a high-priority non-proliferation issue. In that regard, we welcomed the adoption of a resolution on the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) safeguards agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by consensus at the sixty-sixth session of the IAEA General Conference. Through that resolution, 175 IAEA Member States spoke with one voice in deploring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing nuclear activities, as also pointed out in the IAEA 2022 annual report, and in support of diplomatic engagement to achieve the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and sustainable peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

My Government will continue to work with the international community towards the complete denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula, based on my Government's Audacious Initiative. We

urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease all its destabilizing actions in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, respond positively to our proposal and return to a path of dialogue and to the NPT and IAEA safeguards regime. In that regard, we commend the IAEA's efforts to maintain and enhance its readiness to play its essential role in verifying the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when a political agreement is reached. In conclusion, we affirm our strong support for the work of the Agency and for draft resolution A/77/L.9, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Mr. Al Ashkar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Syrian Arab Republic attaches great importance to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s fulfilment of its mandate in accordance with its statute. My country acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1969 and signed its Safeguards Agreement with the Agency in 1992. We have consistently supported the right of all Member States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Israeli aggression that targeted a building in the Syrian governorate of Deir ez-Zor in September 2007 was a violation of Syria's sovereignty and a flagrant violation of international law. Instead of being unequivocally condemned, that violation was used as a platform to promote false allegations against Syria, distorting its image and seeking to put political pressure on it. The item being discussed by the IAEA's Board of Governors regarding Syria's implementation of its Safeguards Agreement is one of the negative aspects of how some countries manipulate the Agency to serve their political agendas. In that regard, I would like to note the following points.

First, the Agency's statute required that the United States report to the Agency the information it had prior to the destruction of the building in Deir ez-Zor rather than eight months after Israel destroyed it. The same applies to Israel, which disregarded the need to provide the Agency with the information it had and carried out an insidious military aggression against the sovereignty of Syria's territory.

Secondly, Israel's official acknowledgement of its responsibility for that aggression requires that it cooperate with the Agency in revealing the nature of the contamination caused by the missiles used in its aggression. As long as Israel, the aggressor, fails to cooperate with the Agency in that regard, any discussion of the subject remains futile.

Thirdly, most of the Agency's conclusions about the destroyed building in Deir ez-Zor were based on images and analysis provided by the Central Intelligence Agency. That raises many questions regarding the credibility of the information that the Agency received, especially in the light of the United States' earlier aggression against Iraq, which was launched on the pretext of a misleading dossier about the alleged existence of weapons of mass destruction.

Fourthly, Syria cooperated positively and constructively with the Agency and allowed its team to visit the targeted site in Deir ez-Zor in June 2008 and collect samples. Syria also reached an agreement for an action plan with the Agency in October 2011, including a solution for all pending matters. However, pressures by some Member States hindered that endeavour.

Some countries continue to question my country's cooperation with the Agency while they violate their obligations under the NPT by turning a blind eye and protecting Israel, which has continued to maintain its nuclear programme without any international supervision. Those countries have even been strengthening their cooperation with Israel by allowing it to develop its military capabilities, especially by providing it with the expertise, materials and technology necessary to develop and manufacture nuclear weapons. Israel's hostile conduct in the region, as well as its nuclear capabilities, which remain outside the framework of the NPT and the scope of the Agency's safeguards agreements, represent a real threat to the NPT in the Middle East. Israel rejects all initiatives calling for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It also refuses to subject its nuclear facilities to the Agency's safeguards system. That constitutes a serious threat to regional and international peace and security that should not continue to be met with silence but should be brought to an end. To tackle that challenge, the international community should act swiftly by taking practical deterrent measures that would compel Israel to join the NPT and enable the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, keeping in mind the fact that every country in the region except Israel is committed to achieving that objective.

In conclusion, my delegation rejects the accusations that we are not in compliance with the NPT and reiterates that Syria has never ceased to cooperate with the Agency. The reports on the implementation of the

relevant safeguards are evidence that Syria has never failed to abide by its legal obligations in accordance with its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the NPT, and that we have met all requests for regular inspections on time, despite the difficulties we have been dealing with in the past few years owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and various countries' hostile policies towards my country. Syria has cooperated with the IAEA with total transparency and flexibility and has made every possible effort to settle pending issues, including agreeing on an action plan to resolve them. The Agency's annual reports on the implementation of its safeguards, most recently this year, testify to Syria's full implementation of its commitments.

Mr. Moharram (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General, Mr. Rafael Grossi, for his tireless efforts, which are outlined in the Agency's report (see A/77/308 and A/77/308/Add.1).

We reaffirm Saudi Arabia's firm position with regard to the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the basis of a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as on the balance that should be established among the Treaty's three pillars and the important role of the IAEA in the area of monitoring and verifying the obligations of States pursuant to international treaties and conventions within the jurisdiction of the Agency.

My country attaches great importance to the peaceful use and development of nuclear energy as one of the basic pillars of the NPT. We affirm the inherent right of States parties to benefit from the development, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and from the safe and secure exploitation of natural resources at the national level. Saudi Arabia's national policies are committed to atomic energy and the strictest norms of transparency, safety and security in developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in various areas, in conformity with the relevant international treaties and conventions. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia cooperates with the IAEA in verifying the integration of operational measures with our national atomic energy project. And we cooperate with many States and experienced actors in the nuclear arena in order to benefit from their expertise and experience in implementing our national atomic energy project and ensure its success.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia underscores the importance of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system and comprehensive safeguards agreements, pursuant to article III of the NPT. We signed and ratified our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in 2009, because we believe in the importance of the comprehensive safeguards system for achieving the universality of the NPT. At the same time, we stress the voluntary nature of the IAEA additional protocol and the importance of not creating obstacles to States' ability to harness nuclear energy for peaceful uses, or imposing additional commitments other than those established by the Agency. We call on the international community to compel Israel to subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards system and join the NPT.

My delegation is concerned about the fact that according to the IAEA's report, Iran is not cooperating with the Agency's monitoring and verification activities related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or those related to Iran's implementation of its commitments under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. The Agency says it is unable to verify the nuclear activities of Iran in accordance with the agreement, which has led it to confirm that it cannot be sure whether the Iranian nuclear programme is truly aimed at peaceful purposes. We therefore call on Iran to cooperate with the Agency.

We reaffirm Saudi Arabia's position in support of the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The 1995 resolution on the matter remains valid until that zone is created, as well as until all nuclear facilities in the region are subjected to the Agency's safeguards system and the absence of any clandestine nuclear activities or programmes is ascertained. In that regard, we commend the efforts undertaken during the first and second meetings of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, and hope for positive results at the third meeting. We also hope for the participation of all States parties as well as the States that sponsored the resolution on the establishment of such a zone.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms Saudi Arabia's support for the promotion of the role of women in the area of disarmament and the achievement of employment parity between men and women. We support the appointment of women to leading roles

within international organizations in the area of disarmament. My country will continue to support the appointment of Saudi women in the disarmament arena at the United Nations and in relevant international organizations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. Beresford-Hill (Sovereign Order of Malta): Since 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has continued to champion its mission of promoting the peaceful and responsible use of nuclear energy across our planet. The Sovereign Order of Malta acknowledges the importance of that much-needed devotion and dedication to combating one of the biggest challenges the world continues to face.

Today the nuclear-weapon stockpile currently stands at more than 13,000 nuclear warheads, and now, while various arguments have been made about the necessity of such weapons, we must open our eyes to the most recent developments we have witnessed at the multilateral level of diplomacy. The failure in August of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach consensus, along with the rising global nuclear tensions, has cast a dark shadow over the current geopolitical landscape. Greater surveillance of the production and intent of nuclear weapons should be respected by all Member States unanimously and without obstruction. As Cardinal Parolin said, as long as nuclear weapons exist, we cannot rule out the possibility of their use, which threatens any possible future for our common home, as well as humankind's very existence.

The Sovereign Order of Malta strongly believes that the transparent picture presented by the IAEA's Country Nuclear Power Profiles remains one of the best solutions available to the international community in advocating for the total elimination of nuclear weapons on our planet. The sobering reality of the cost of nuclear weapons remains harrowing. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons estimates that nine nuclear-armed States spent \$82.4 billion on their nuclear weapons in 2021 alone. Those expenditures were made during a global pandemic, rising global food insecurity and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. To put that into perspective, the cost of feeding a child for an entire school year through the Mary's Meals charity stands at only \$18 per child. That is for one

year. Nuclear expenditure is money that is needed and deserved elsewhere. We have only to listen to the voices of the nations of the Vulnerable 20 Group in Sharm El-Sheikh this week, calling for climate reparation funds and for honouring the pledge of \$100 billion in funding to deal with climate change — which is only a bit more than the cost of one year of nuclear proliferation.

Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe, in his pastoral letter "Living in the Light of Christ's Peace", reminds us that during his presidency, Ronald Reagan spoke directly to the people of what was then the Soviet Union. He said that there was one sane policy for their country and one sane policy for his to preserve our civilization in the nuclear age. What was it? It was that a nuclear war can never be won and therefore can never be fought, and that the only value in two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be so much better to do away with them?

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker on this agenda item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/77/L.9, 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 in document A/77/L.9, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka,

Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/77/L.9?

Draft resolution A/77/L.9 was adopted (resolution 77/9).

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

Mr. Kalmar (Israel): I am compelled to exercise our right of reply in response to remarks about my country by Iran and Syria. As on many other occasions, the representatives of those two countries have stood here again today to perpetuate lies and false accusations. However, the clear facts must not be ignored. Iran and Syria, knowingly and deliberately, have continued to violate and undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as they seek to destabilize the Middle East and threaten its inhabitants. They must immediately and unconditionally provide answers to the International Atomic Energy Agency regarding the violations of their safeguards agreements.

Mr. Rosinas (Lithuania): I will be brief. I want to exercise my right of reply in response to the statement by the representative of Belarus.

Lithuania fully respects the right of every country to develop nuclear energy. At the same time, any country embarking on a nuclear energy programme has the obligation to abide by the highest international standards for nuclear safety and has to take national decisions in consideration of a broader context of possible transboundary implications. The issues that Lithuania has raised here and in Vienna are of a technical character. They are related to safety and to a responsible approach to the implementation of a nuclear power plant project, and they range from site selection to issues related to commissioning.

We have been closely following the development of the Belarusian nuclear power plant project, and in the process we have witnessed a selective approach to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other

modern nuclear safety standards and recommendations. We have also witnessed a disregard for the requirements set by the conventions of the Economic Commission for Europe and a lack of transparency and openness. Our grave concerns are based on those particular questions, and that is why we have chosen to address them in the framework of the consideration of the IAEA's annual report.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am compelled to take the floor to reject the allegations made by the representative of the Israeli regime about my country.

Israel is in flagrant violation of international law and has continued its malicious behaviour through its illegal and illegitimate acts in the territories it has occupied, as well as through its assassinations of scientists, its acts of sabotage and its cyber and kinetic attacks on other countries. With respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is an undeniable fact that the Israeli regime is the only culprit in this area in the Middle East, and it continues to defy all international rules governing weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Israel's frequent and consistent negative votes in the First Committee and other forums against the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, proposed by Iran in 1974, continue to hamper this long-overdue objective. It has refused to participate in the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. There can be no excuse for objecting to or taking any hostile positions on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. Indeed, nuclear weapons in the hands of this regime pose the most serious threat there is to the security of all States in the Middle East and to the non-proliferation regime. Despite that, and together with some other States, it has attempted to distort Iran's exclusively peaceful nuclear programme, which is under extremely robust verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency, in what is nothing but a deceitful move to distract attention from the real danger that the Israeli regime poses to regional peace and security, particularly through its nuclear-weapon arsenals and its clandestine and unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities.

Mrs. Kavaleuskaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to comment on the statement by the representative of Lithuania. We want to reiterate that ensuring nuclear safety and security is a task that requires daily practical efforts on the part of every State and constructive and focused cooperation in specialized international platforms. In cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international partners, Belarus is working responsibly to ensure the greatest possible safety and security of the Belarusian nuclear power plant and is taking every necessary step to ensure the transparency of its construction and operation. We regularly participate in reviews under international conventions on ensuring nuclear safety and security, such as the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Our national reports can be found on the Internet. It is also well known that we are working in the same way at the regional level. Just as is done with nuclear power plants in the European Union, we have conducted voluntary stress tests and a partner assessment of our nuclear power station. We once again affirm that Belarus is interested in more active and constructive cooperation in ensuring nuclear safety and security on a bilateral level and in

establishing direct, constructive contacts between Belarus and Lithuania with the Government bodies and organizations concerned.

Mr. Al Ashkar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for taking the floor again, but I wish to respond to the statement made by the representative of Israel. I will be brief. Israel's position is weak. The representative of Israel is resorting to false allegations in order to distract attention from the fact that it has an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and refuses to adhere to any disarmament treaties or conventions. It is high time that the international community opposed those grave actions and took firm action to bring Israel into the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State, while submitting its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards system.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

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 4.45 p.m.