UNITED KINGDOM


Cluster III – Peaceful Uses

Statement

By

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Head of the United Kingdom Delegation

at the

2012 Preparatory Committee for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

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Cluster III – Peaceful Uses

Statement by the United Kingdom

Mr Chairman,

1. My delegation fully supports the statement made by the EU External Action Service on behalf of the European Union. I should like to highlight one or two key issues relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2. Firstly, the United Kingdom, like many States, continues to recognise the potential of nuclear energy to help meet the growing global need for low-carbon energy. Such demands are intense: a doubling of global electricity demand is anticipated by the year 2050. Indeed one outcome of the accident at Fukushima that followed the tragic seismic events off Japan last year has been a more open and transparent debate, worldwide, on matters of energy security. While it was right that there was overwhelming international commitment to examining, and acting on, the lessons from Fukushima, the implementation of Article IV rights on peaceful uses will be even more important. We are committed to promoting the safe expansion of nuclear energy for those States who choose to use it.

3. The agreement to an Action Plan, reached at the 2010 RevCon, was a remarkable milestone, not least regarding peaceful uses. Action 59, for example, urging signatories to consider becoming party to the various Conventions relating to nuclear safety, management of nuclear material, and nuclear accident procedures, was particularly prescient. On the question of nuclear security, the recent Summit in Seoul has reaffirmed the ambitious goal to secure all vulnerable nuclear material within four years. The UK fully supports this. We are a major contributor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, with £8m either given or pledged since 2010, and we urge other States able to provide such contributions to do so.

4. On verification, we fully support, and further encourage, the IAEA in its efforts to introduce the State Level concept and a safeguards system that is fully information driven. This can take account of the possibilities opened up by full application of new and existing technology, along with more remote and continuous monitoring. In short, it will enable State factors to be taken into account – differentiation without discrimination – making best use of limited safeguards resources. In this regard we
are pleased to have been able to provide £500k this year towards improvements at the ECAS safeguards laboratory of the IAEA.

5. Since the 2010 Review Conference, there has also been considerable progress on multinational approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle – the steps under Action 58. Such mechanisms can build confidence in the reliable supply of nuclear fuel, either by reducing or removing the risks of interruption to supply, or by reducing the potential costs of duplicating fuel cycle facilities. They therefore help take forward the intentions of those States who seek to introduce or expand a nuclear power programme. They also help reinforce international standards of safety and security. In this regard the UK commends the work of the IAEA and individual States in bringing proposals for two LEU banks to the IAEA Board for approval and looks forward to further progress on the IAEA LEU bank. The UK was also pleased to bring its own proposal for a Nuclear Fuel Assurance – a State level agreement underpinning a commercial contract – to the Agency Board, in March 2011. Perhaps most importantly, such multilateral approaches do not represent a cost to, or impact on, those States who choose not to pursue nuclear energy or make use of these measures.

Mr Chairman,

6. In conclusion, there is clearly strong evidence of important progress since 2010. This is vital: nuclear energy and nuclear technologies will play a stronger role in our increasingly energy-intensive and technology-hungry world. The framework provided by the NPT will correspondingly become more important and more visible as, globally, we seek to ensure that that expansion is safe, secure, and viable. The United Kingdom takes its commitments to the NPT in general and to the 2010 Action Plan very seriously indeed. We fully support the work of the IAEA, and remain committed to strong and open cooperation on all aspects of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.