Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster II

Statement by Mr. Gerard Keown,
Director for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland

Mr. Chairman,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement by the European Union under this cluster.

The non-proliferation pillar of the NPT, and the related actions which we all agreed to in 2010, stand between us and a nuclear weapons free-for-all. We have consistently argued for a balanced implementation across all three pillars and we attach equal importance, therefore, to the non-proliferation provisions of the NPT. We must protect this pillar. The Treaty has stemmed the wide scale horizontal proliferation which would undoubtedly have ensued in the absence of an NPT, and we are strongly committed to furthering the objectives of this pillar of the Treaty, both on its own merits and as a contribution to the goal of disarmament.

In addressing the non-proliferation pillar of the Treaty within the terms of the 2010 Action Plan, it will be important for us to reaffirm the central importance of the IAEA safeguards system to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We must each continue to exert all efforts to promote universal adherence to the NPT, as set out in Action 23 of the Action Plan, and to consider how we can advance the universalisation of comprehensive safeguards as a means of ensuring compliance with the Treaty's objectives, as set out in Action 29. We of course urge those states which have not yet done so to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Ireland welcomes the forthcoming IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security in July 2013 and we encourage NPT States Parties to support this initiative. We also encourage all States to take effective action to implement the provisions of UNSCR 1540.

Together with our fellow member of the Vienna Group of 10, Ireland has proposed a number of working papers to this Preparatory Committee on compliance and verification; on the CTBT; on export controls; on nuclear safety and on nuclear security. We trust that these submissions will contribute to the work of this conference and to our joint work implementing this pillar of the Treaty.
Ireland and its EU partners are subject to a comprehensive Code of Conduct on military and dual use exports which requires that export licences should be refused if approval would be inconsistent with, inter alia, the NPT. We believe that the Code of Conduct represents one of the strongest export control regimes in the world.

Together with many States present here, Ireland is an active participant in a number of export control regimes whose aim is to counter, curb and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, material or know-how.

As an exporter of dual use goods, for example, Ireland participates in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee. In line with Action 36 of the Action Plan, these arrangements, as well as other regimes such as the Hague Code of Conduct and the Missile Technology Control Regime in which we also actively participate, are important practical elements of the non-proliferation regime built around the NPT.

It is important that our export controls arrangements continue to facilitate transfers of technology and equipment for peaceful uses, in conformity with Articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty. To do this, however, and as Action 35 stipulates, we must be in a position to ensure that such exports do not directly or indirectly facilitate the development of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We take our responsibilities in this area seriously, and we encourage other States to do so as well.

We take equally seriously our obligation to speak up when the non-proliferation commitments of the Treaty are not being met.

Mr. Chairman,

The DPRK represents the most serious nuclear proliferation challenge facing us today and we condemn and deplore the recent weapons and missile testing by Pyongyang. We call upon the DPRK to desist from any further provocative actions and to return to full compliance with its obligations under the NPT and its IAEA safeguards agreement. It is essential that the international community remains unified and resolute in its opposition to nuclear weapons proliferation. We must continue to urge the DPRK to re-engage in talks on the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, immediately and without pre-conditions.

We deplore Syria's undeclared steps towards a nuclear reactor, as set out in a succession of IAEA reports since 2010. We are deeply concerned about recent reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, allegations which merit the strongest possible condemnation and the fullest investigation. We call on Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA and the UN on both these issues. In the context of our discussions here, we call on the Syrian authorities to take steps immediately to comply with their commitments under their NPT Safeguards Agreement, to cooperate fully and transparently with the IAEA and to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

We call on Iran to address the concerns of the IAEA and the wider international community regarding its nuclear programme. These are legitimate questions for Iran to answer and we call on it to do so. We recognise the entitlement of any NPT State Party to the peaceful uses
of nuclear technology. In order to do so, however, States must demonstrate that they meet the minimum requirements, the benchmark of which is the IAEA safeguards system. Iran asserts its entitlement to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT. We expect it, therefore, to meet its obligations under the Treaty. This means complying with UN Security Council and IAEA Resolutions on Iran. We also encourage the Iranian authorities to engage fully, openly and constructively in its dialogue with the E3+3, building on the recent meetings in Almaty.

Mr Chairman,

Ireland has always placed a particular emphasis on disarmament as a key driver of any concerted effort towards a world free of nuclear weapons. We cannot fail to notice a regrettably familiar ring to the language of deterrence with which the DPRK attempts to justify its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. We remain firmly of the view that progress on disarmament would remove any possible perceived incentive for a State to respond to a nuclear weapons capability by developing its own retaliatory capability. The conviction that there is an inseparable link between the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation was one of the reasons behind the formation of the New Agenda Coalition and we remain as convinced of this today as we were fifteen years ago.

We fear that failure to act on disarmament undermines the NPT's undoubted achievements on non-proliferation. Let us be resolute, therefore, in advancing both sets of provisions, hand-in-hand.