THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

CLUSTER 3 ISSUES STATEMENT

to the

THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE
2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE TREATY ON
THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS

By

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr. Chairman,

1. The UK would like to align itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the European Union. I should like, in addition, to highlight one or two key issues in a national capacity relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2. The role that civil nuclear energy should play in meeting the growing demand for energy, whilst also meeting climate change goals through reduced carbon emissions, continues to be a source of debate. The UK remains fully committed to the promotion of safe nuclear energy by those who wish to use it. Our own programme of civil nuclear new-build is testament to that commitment.

3. A commitment to civil nuclear energy comes with responsibilities. The UK encourages States to become party to the various Conventions relating to nuclear safety, management of nuclear material, and nuclear accident procedures. It is also important that signatories participate fully in the spirit and intent of the objectives of these Conventions, and implement them fully. These conventions are crucial, and we commend the leadership of the IAEA in coordinating and implementing the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, and for hosting the Nuclear Security Conference in July 2013. We understand that many Member States have made good progress in implementing the IAEA Action Plan. We support the practice of publishing reports on the progress to date, and the notification of progress to the IAEA.

4. An independent and robust regulator is crucial to the safe and secure development of civil nuclear energy. The nuclear regulatory framework in the UK has recently been enhanced through the transition of the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to an independent, statutory body with effect from 1 April. The ONR brings together the functions of civil nuclear safety, security, safeguards implementation, radioactive materials transport and health and safety on nuclear sites, and provides a model for an effective, open and transparent regulator.
Mr. Chairman,

5. In October 2011 the UK welcomed an International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) Mission to the UK, the first Nuclear Weapon State to do so. The Mission visited the Sellafield civil nuclear site and Barrow port, and concluded that the civil nuclear security in place was robust. Earlier this year, we invited the IAEA to send a follow-up IPPAS Mission to the UK, which we hope to host in 2015-16.

6. The UK is proud of its support to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund, and will provide a further £3.4m to the Fund this year, bringing the total UK contribution since 2010 to over £12m. We urge other States who are able to provide contributions to do so. We also commend global efforts to minimise use of high enriched uranium, and replace its use in research reactors with low enriched uranium wherever possible. In this regard the UK is taking steps to defuel its last HEU-fuelled research reactor, and to move the fuel for long term management.

7. On a separate note, effective safety, security and safeguards procedures also underpin the safe and assured use of small scale nuclear techniques, contributing markedly to a better quality of life in nearly every country. The wider use of nuclear applications, including medical diagnosis and treatment, crop protection, and understanding climate change better, is recognised as a major potential contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The UK is fully supportive of the work done by the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Programme in these wider uses of nuclear applications.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Very few, if any, states have all the necessary resources, expertise or experience, to research, develop, and utilise civil nuclear energy for their own benefit, in line with the rights expressed in Article IV of the NPT. Cooperation and partnership are essential, and will become even more important as resources become more stretched. So the frameworks for participating in the fullest possible exchanges of
equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information are fundamental. Based on our experience in the successful operation of nuclear facilities since the mid-1950s, the UK takes pride in its record as a partner on nuclear technology and skills. We continue to promote formal and informal cooperation agreements with others on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

9. The UK also supports efforts to develop multinational approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. By removing or reducing the risks of interruption to fuel supply, or removing the potential costs of unnecessary fuel cycle facilities, such measures can assist those States who seek to introduce or expand a civil nuclear power programme. Multinational approaches can also help reinforce international standards of safety and security. Moreover they pose no burden or impact on those States who do not wish to pursue nuclear energy or use them.

10. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the UK notes that the role of peaceful uses of nuclear energy can only intensify as the world seeks ever more energy, reliably and sustainably, and looks to nuclear technology to play an increasing role in securing better quality and duration of life for so many more people. The role of the NPT – to help the world take advantage of what nuclear technologies have to offer in a safe, secure, and sustainable way – becomes ever more important. The United Kingdom is fully committed to the NPT and to the 2010 Action Plan. In this regard we strongly support the work of the IAEA, and look to the future as a committed global partner across the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.