



STATEMENT

By

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NPT Preparatory Committee 2004

Cluster III

29 April 2004

Check against delivery

Mr Chairman

The United Kingdom strongly supports the statement made by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union and would like to make a couple of brief national comments.

Alongside disarmament and non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are often regarded as the third 'pillar' of the NPT.

ARTICLE IV

We would like to use this opportunity to stress once again the United Kingdom's continued support for Article IV of the Treaty, which provides a framework of confidence and co-operation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This framework is supported by progress towards the adoption of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols, as well as the presence of strong and effective export control systems. We recognise the importance of transparency in export controls; the United Kingdom operates transparent, published, licensing criteria, that have regard to our international commitments.

RESTRICTING THE SUPPLY OF ENRICHMENT AND REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY

But as we have already stated here this week, Mr Chairman, and as set out in the 2000 Final Document, the right for all States Party to have access to nuclear energy must be in conformity with their obligations under Articles I, II and III of the Treaty. This includes compliance with those articles.

Mr Chairman, States Party know that, in response to the revelations about the so-called nuclear black market, there are a number of ideas which have been proposed recently to strengthen the NPT and which, in particular, are intended to limit the transfer of the most sensitive of nuclear items such as enrichment and reprocessing technology.

In a statement to the United Kingdom Parliament on 25 February, the Foreign Secretary proposed that States Party which have failed to comply with their safeguards obligations should forfeit the right to access to some of the benefits of peaceful uses, such as the nuclear fuel cycle. For instance, they might still construct and run civil nuclear power stations, but they should operate them with fuel supplied by countries honouring their safeguards obligations. Under this proposal, the fuel would be closely monitored by IAEA safeguards inspectors while in the receiving country, and would be returned to the country of supply when spent. This would prevent a seemingly civil programme masking a weapons programme.

Mr Chairman, we have made this proposal as part of the growing debate on the need to strengthen the NPT and the growing international willingness to counter the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are discussing it, and other proposals which are similar in nature, with a number of States Party, and it is our intention and desire that we reach international consensus on such a measure in the future.

IAEA TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

Mr Chairman, I would now like to turn to Technical Co-Operation.

The United Kingdom has been at the forefront of the development of all aspects of nuclear technology and is involved in international projects on innovative reactors and fuel cycles. We remain a strong supporter of the IAEA's work in developing programmes that improve the technological, scientific and regulatory capabilities of its Member States and in particular contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We staunchly support the Agency's Technical Co-Operation activities, which we know are of great value to so many of its Member States. The Agency has made considerable contributions in many areas, including human health, agriculture and the environment. The United Kingdom has made clear its commitment to promoting Technical Co-Operation by once again this year maintaining its excellent record of paying its target Technical Co-Operation Fund payments in full and on time.

Mr Chairman, in conclusion, while progress continues to be made in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, this must be accompanied by the measures necessary to prevent proliferation. Key amongst these is the need for States with significant nuclear facilities to adopt and demonstrably comply with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols. We will continue to pursue our ideas about restricting the supply of enrichment and reprocessing technology to those States which are not in compliance with their other obligations under the Treaty.

Thank you Mr Chairman.