



**Third Session
Of the Preparatory Committee
For the 2005 Review Conference
Of the Parties to the Treaty
On the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Cluster III

**Statement by M. Philippe THIEBAUD
Governor for France
To the International Atomic Energy Agency**

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(Traduit du Français – seule la version française fait foi)

Mr. Chairman,

The French delegation would like to associate itself with the Irish delegation's declaration in the name of the European Union.

France places a high premium on the development of civilian applications of the atom, which is why it takes a keen interest in the debate on peaceful uses of nuclear energy and intends to work to give full meaning to the terms of Article IV of the Treaty.

This debate takes place within a framework that has been given fresh impetus by inclusion of the imperatives of sustainable development. Where energy is concerned, the international nuclear scene has witnessed a distinct upsurge of vitality in those countries that have chosen to use nuclear energy to achieve sustainable economic development, notably on account of its advantages in terms of security of energy supplies and its contribution to the fight against climate change, competitiveness and price stability.

Among their many benefits, nuclear technologies can contribute greatly to development in the fields of health, agriculture and the food industry, management of drinking water resources, and environmental protection.

In the quest for sustainable development and progress, it is important that everyone involved in the nuclear sector work to devise new forms of cooperation in order to foster this aim most effectively.

My delegation would like to mention, in that regard, that international cooperative efforts to design more competitive, safer, less waste-producing nuclear power generation systems for the future, also incorporate non-proliferation concerns into their criteria. We are convinced that the research underway will come up with proposals for effective and competitive technical solutions, answering both the world's energy needs, safety concerns, and public concern over the environmental impact of nuclear activities, thus gaining wider acceptance for them.

As a token of this commitment, the French authorities have decided to participate fully in the IAEA's INPRO project. For we believe that this project can yield important methodological contributions to projects for developing the nuclear technologies of the future in the areas of safety, resistance to proliferation, and to aspects relating to the environment and the analysis of national needs, especially

those of countries acquiring nuclear technologies. France further considers it necessary to develop the complementary features and synergies between INPRO and the other projects relating to innovative systems, especially research and development programmes being carried out within the framework of the Generation IV International Forum.

These research projects ought also to pave the way for combinations of electricity generation and other applications such as the production of hydrogen as an energy source, or sea water desalination, thereby furnishing a genuine response to concerns associated with population growth and economic development in high-growth regions, while at the same time preserving the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

The French Government has for years endeavoured to conduct a responsible energy policy, capable of assuring safe, economic and environmentally friendly energy supplies. This policy now faces new environmental and geopolitical challenges, as well as ones connected with developments in the energy market.

The French authorities organized an extensive public debate on energy in March-May 2003 with a view to framing broad energy policy directions for France over the next thirty years. Via a host of meetings and events, this debate served to involve all of the parties concerned in the Government's thinking and to forge a consensus on the principles that ought to guide national energy policy. These principles are: competitiveness, independence, respect for the environment, the right to energy, and international coordination. These exchanges of views confirmed the need for a diversified array of energies, with nuclear power retaining an acknowledged place among them. This debate formed part of the discussions leading up to a framework law to be laid before the spring session of the French Parliament. This law will set broad national policy guidelines and priorities, paving the way for the necessary decisions, especially in the nuclear sphere, as transparently as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

France considers that the dissemination of technologies for peaceful ends ought to benefit the greatest possible number of States, provided they subscribe to the

appropriate commitments. Accordingly, my country is cooperating with a growing number of countries and institutions, thereby testifying to its commitment to the promotion of peaceful uses of the atom and to the application of Article IV of the Treaty. We are active at both international and national levels, as well as through initiatives conducted within the framework of the European Union.

My country has consistently supported the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme. France regularly pays its full contribution to the Agency's technical cooperation fund, and invites all States to do likewise. In addition, it is funding numerous projects directly, and French specialists are contributing to expert missions in a wide range of areas. At the same time, we are forging ahead with our policy of receiving numerous trainees in almost all areas of nuclear technology applications. Finally, we are resolutely maintaining our commitment in the field of training, notably with respect to radiation protection.

The development and transfer of nuclear technologies must form part of a long-term approach to the management of knowledge and skills, with a view to preserving the knowledge acquired and training the specialists required for tomorrow's research and industry. France has long worked to that end; it is keeping a close watch on programs undertaken, and is providing active and substantial assistance to the IAEA's planned efforts to frame a global strategy in this area. One outcome of this involvement is the joint-organization, with the IAEA, of an international conference on nuclear knowledge management, to be held in France in the second half of 2004.

Mr. Chairman,

Although my country recognises the inalienable right of States, as enshrined in Article IV of the NPT, to benefit from the development of nuclear energy for peaceful ends and from international cooperation in this field, it considers, nevertheless, that this right can only legitimately be exercised if the safeguard measures provided in Article III of the Treaty are fully respected, those measures being the essential pre-condition for the emergence of a climate of confidence among all concerned. This climate presupposes three imperatives, namely non-proliferation and security, safety, and transparency. Far from being obstacles, these imperatives are, on the contrary, essential in order to facilitate exchanges and permit the full and comprehensive implementation of Article IV of the Treaty in keeping with its Articles I, II, and III.

Among the conditions for the development of peaceful applications of nuclear technologies, respect for the imperatives of non-proliferation and security of nuclear materials and facilities is, now more than ever, one of the major challenges facing the international community. To meet that challenge, to prevent risks of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, to thwart acts of nuclear terrorism, and to fight against non-State proliferation networks, an efficient safeguards system providing credible and reliable assurances, with flawless security, are the bedrock of international confidence.

A global vision is needed in order to respond to the new and existing challenges in this sphere, a vision that embraces the contributions of the NPT, the Security Council, the G8, the PSI initiatives, the international conventions, and the suppliers groups.

I will not dwell on the subject of safeguards and export controls, having already had occasion to express my views on this subject. I would simply like to emphasize yet again the importance of verification of compliance with obligations, and of the strengthening of the safeguards system through adoption by a growing number of States of protocols additional to their safeguards agreements. France shares the views of the IAEA's Director General as to the irreplaceable role of the Additional Protocol within a strengthened verification mechanism, which alone can provide real and effective assurances of non-proliferation. My country further wishes to promote the adoption of the Additional Protocol as a condition of supply for exports of the most sensitive technologies and goods connected with the fuel cycle.

Mr. Chairman,

The French delegation will express its views on the security and safety of peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the course of the debate specifically devoted to these issues. I would like therefore to confine myself here to the issue of sea transport, which several delegations have raised. The strictest possible safety measures must apply to the transportation of nuclear and radioactive materials. With a record of safe transport going back more than thirty years, France played an active part in the work of the International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material which took place in Vienna, last year. This conference highlighted the high level of safety and maturity achieved in these activities. It confirmed the desirability of international action and the need for continued

cooperation and dialogue in order to be able to go on providing the highest possible level of safety and move forward together in improving it still further.

For its part, France is working to provide the highest level of safety possible for all modes of transport, without exception, and regardless of the materials transported. Our legislation is strictly in conformity with international regulations. In a spirit of progress and transparency, France has asked the IAEA to conduct a TRANSAS evaluation mission. This took place at the beginning of April and involved the French nuclear safety authority and government agencies concerned by the different forms of nuclear materials transport. In the case of international transport, moreover, France and its partners have been engaged in a dialogue over many years aimed at achieving greater transparency, and at providing those countries that express the need with the desired assurances together with certain types of information they may require. Our action in this regard must nevertheless respect the basic demands of security and must not run counter to the law of the sea.

Mr. Chairman,

The final imperative is transparency. The development of nuclear power is inconceivable in the absence of political will on the one hand, and public support on the other. But the fullest possible transparency is essential if Governments and public are to be properly aware of the issues at stake and the means being deployed. Where France is concerned, my country will continue resolutely to pursue its ongoing efforts at transparency and information, in the field of safety especially. With regard to nuclear materials, may I remind you that France is a member of the group of States that have signed the directives on the management of plutonium intended for peaceful uses; as such, we publish the state of our civil stock annually. My delegation wishes to call on all the plutonium user countries to sign up to this transparent, responsible approach. France is equally convinced that the management of highly enriched uranium would benefit from similar directives. It publishes information concerning its stocks of highly enriched uranium for civil purposes on a voluntary basis.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, please allow me to emphasize once again that peaceful applications of the atom offer countless benefits to the world, helping to promote sustainable

development and economic and social progress for people in all countries. Fifty years after the “Atoms for Peace” initiative, my country remains deeply committed to ensuring that nuclear power retains its rightful place among the planet’s energy resources, in the service of progress, and within a framework respecting both people and our planet.

The establishment of vigorous international cooperation will allow a growing number of countries to benefit from peaceful applications of the atom. This lies at the very heart of the NPT. It is the duty of all of the States parties to continue working for the full and comprehensive implementation of the rights recognised in Article IV, while respecting the obligations laid down in Articles I, II and III of the Treaty.

Which is why my country remains deeply attached to the preservation of a balanced approach in our debate, one that makes due allowance for this aspect of the Treaty, allowing the promises of Article IV to be fully realized.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.