

**Presentation to the First Committee**  
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**“Current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament and role of  
respective organizations”**

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Mr. Chairman,

The International Atomic Energy Agency welcomes this opportunity to share with delegations to the First Committee some remarks and ideas on topics of relevance to the IAEA and the international community as a whole.

Fifty years ago, the IAEA was entrusted with the mission of ensuring that nuclear energy would not become a cause for the destruction of humanity, but rather an engine for peace and prosperity. Security and development were brought together as two aspects of the same ideal: "Atoms for Peace".

If one were to recall our history since that time, a number of milestones would stand out, as well as challenges and painful experiences, necessitating change, adjustment and innovation. Today, we would like to refer to some recent developments and current challenges. But in doing this, we should not lose sight of the goals and ideals that have guided the Agency since its inception. They remain as relevant and meaningful today as they were to our founders in 1957.

### **The Evolving Nuclear Threats**

It is clear that nuclear threats have become more dangerous and more complex. The emergence of illicit trade in nuclear technology is one key example and another is the reported interest of sophisticated extremist groups in acquiring nuclear weapons or radioactive dispersal devices.

In parallel, nuclear material and its production have become more difficult to verify. Energy security concerns and climate change are prompting many countries to revisit the nuclear power option. And to ensure a supply of power reactor fuel, more countries have shown interest in mastering the full nuclear fuel cycle - a step that brings them quite close to a potential nuclear weapon capability.

As the IAEA Director General and other international non-proliferation experts have noted, nearly 27,000 nuclear warheads that reportedly already exist in the arsenals of some nine countries, and the Cold War “hair trigger” alert deployment status of significant numbers of these weapons, further contribute to nuclear fears.

Against this backdrop, there are three critical aspects of the nuclear non-proliferation regime that must be strengthened if a cascade of nuclear proliferation is to be avoided.

First, *security of existing nuclear material stockpiles and improved controls over the transfer and production of nuclear material*, are urgently needed: Effective control of nuclear material remains the “choke point” for preventing the production of additional nuclear weapons.

There are reportedly currently over 1,800 tonnes of plutonium and high-enriched uranium in civil stocks. Many initiatives are in progress to help countries improve the *physical protection* of this weapon-useable nuclear material. Good progress has been made in recent years, but hard work still lies ahead. Efforts in that direction should be redoubled.

The IAEA is supporting international efforts to minimize and eventually eliminate the civilian use of high-enriched uranium (HEU). Nearly 100 civilian facilities around the world, mainly research reactors, operate with small amounts of HEU. But most of their functions could be achieved using low enriched uranium (LEU). Nuclear experts - scientists and engineers - are pressing forward with R&D on the remaining technical hurdles, to ensure that research reactors are capable of performing all required functions using LEU.

Technological innovation will also be essential to support the design of proliferation resistant fuel cycles. A number of countries are working on such designs, as well as on innovation to enhance nuclear safety, security and waste disposal. One important area of R&D, currently being conducted at the laboratory scale, involves new technological approaches for dealing with the plutonium in spent fuel, using innovative approaches to either fuel composition or fuel reprocessing. In each case, the technique would create isotopic barriers in the spent fuel that would allow reprocessing for use in energy generation while preventing the separation of weapon-useable plutonium.

It is also crucial that controls over *nuclear material production* are enhanced - that is, uranium enrichment and plutonium separation activities - by developing a new, multilateral framework for the nuclear fuel cycle. I will return to this point later.

Second, *the verification authority and capability of the IAEA must be strengthened*: Effective verification has four elements: adequate legal authority; state-of-the-art technology; access to all relevant information and locations; and sufficient human and financial resources.

During the last decade, the Agency's safeguards system experienced a remarkable transformation. It evolved from a system focused on declared nuclear material at declared nuclear facilities, to a much more comprehensive, information driven system, able to provide credible assurance regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in States as a whole.

The strengthening of safeguards in the early 1990s introduced new methods and techniques: for example, remote monitoring or environmental sampling. The additional protocol to safeguards agreements has proven its value since its adoption in 1997. With better access to relevant information and locations, the IAEA provides credible assurance. Without the additional protocol, the IAEA cannot provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activity. Additional Protocols are presently in force in 84 States, and so more progress still remains to be made. Some 30 NPT non-nuclear-weapon States party have not yet concluded the required safeguards

agreement with the Agency – and in the absence of safeguards in these countries, the IAEA cannot perform any verification activities and therefore cannot provide any assurance. For a credible verification system, a safeguards agreement and an additional protocol should be the universal standard.

Looking to the future, the Agency's crucial verification role must evolve and expand in many key aspects. An expansion in use of nuclear power could greatly increase the number of nuclear facilities and the amount of nuclear material that would need to be subject to Agency verification. The resuscitation of nuclear disarmament efforts could potentially add to the IAEA's verification and monitoring activities. The Agency will need more sophisticated approaches for information analysis, as well as for continuous updates to verification equipment and expertise. As new facilities and countries come under safeguards, the IAEA will need the corresponding increases in funding and personnel.

Third, ***disarmament needs to be given the prominence and priority it deserves:*** It is now 37 years since the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force. All States except four are within the fold of the NPT. The Treaty includes not only nuclear non-proliferation obligations but also the goal of nuclear disarmament. Whether countries choose to continue to rely on nuclear weapons, as the centerpiece of their security strategy, or to abandon that reliance, their choice will undoubtedly influence the actions of others.

Multilateral disarmament efforts, therefore, need to be revived, by bringing into force the *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty* and initiating negotiation on a verifiable *Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty*. The FMCT and the CTBT are intended to work together in parallel, to prohibit both the quantitative and qualitative tools that would enable countries to develop nuclear weapons - whether new countries or countries that already have these weapons. It is a sincere hope that every effort would be made to see to it that the CTBT will come into force in the near term and that negotiations will start without delay on an FMCT.

## **New Framework for the Nuclear Fuel Cycle**

An expected expansion in nuclear power will drive a commensurate increase in demand for nuclear fuel cycle services and the need for an assurance of supply mechanism. This could also increase the potential proliferation risks created by the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, particularly if more countries decide to create independent uranium enrichment and plutonium separation facilities. These trends point clearly to the urgent need for the development of a new, multilateral framework for the nuclear fuel cycle, both the front and the back end.

Over the past two years, a number of proposals and ideas have been put forward. With respect to the front end, some parties have proposed the creation of an actual or virtual reserve fuel bank of last resort, under IAEA auspices, for the assurance of supply of nuclear fuel. This bank would operate on the basis of apolitical and non-discriminatory non-proliferation criteria.

Others are proposing to convert a national facility into an international enrichment centre. Still others are proposing the construction of a new, multinational enrichment facility under IAEA control. The IAEA Secretariat has examined these proposals and their associated legal, technical, financial and institutional aspects. In June, the Director General made a report to the Board on "options" for assurances of supply of nuclear fuel, which he trusts will be of help to Member States in considering this important issue.

Controlling nuclear material is a complex process; yet if without concerted action, it could be the Achilles' heel of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. An incremental approach is the way to move forward, beginning with the establishment of an equitable system for assurance of supply. The next step would seek to bring any new operations for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation under multinational control. Over time, these multinational controls would also be extended to facilities that already exist - to ensure that all countries are treated equally in terms of their nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Chairman

Fifty years after the Atoms for Peace initiative, the time has come to think of a new framework for the use of nuclear energy - a framework that accounts both for the lessons we have learned and the current reality.

In this regard, the First Committee has an important role to play in identifying areas of multilateral non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control that need to be addressed. It is a unique forum for discussion, but more so as the international community's "thermostat" to gauge the progress – or lack of in these crucial matters. The IAEA stands ready to provide relevant expert inputs to the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament processes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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