

44th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Statement on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Introduction.

1. Mr. President, on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation, I should like to associate myself fully with the statement made by M Pascal Colombani, the distinguished representative of France, on behalf of the European Union. In particular let me underline our support for what has been said about the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference in New York earlier this year. The UK, like many others, worked hard to achieve a positive outcome to the Conference, and we look forward to seeing progress being made on implementing what was agreed in New York.
2. I should like to join the representative of France, and other speakers, in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election as the President of the IAEA's General Conference. We are confident that under your guidance the Conference will accomplish its work successfully. My delegation will co-operate fully in this endeavour. I would also like to take this opportunity to join others in welcoming Azerbaijan, the Central African Republic, and Tajikistan into the Agency. Like the distinguished representatives of these three States, I am new to the Agency, having only recently been appointed as the UK's representative on the Board of Governors. I am very honoured to take up this position, and I look forward to working with the Director General, Dr ElBaradei, his colleagues in the Secretariat, and with fellow representatives from all member States in this important area.
3. Mr. President, the last twelve months has seen some important developments. There have been some notable high points, such as the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference. But at the same time, there have been areas where progress has not been as

rapid as we would have hoped for, or indeed where there has been no progress. I will restrict myself to commenting on just a few of the issues which are of prime importance to the United Kingdom.

Safeguards

4. The IAEA has a key role to play in the ongoing success of the NPT, as the organisation charged with applying safeguards, and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements. However, the IAEA can only carry out its verification activities where the necessary agreements are in place. As was noted in the final document, there are still some 51 States that have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements. We urge those States that have not yet done so to conclude, as soon as possible, a safeguards agreement with the IAEA in accordance with their NPT obligations.
5. On a more positive note, there has been some progress towards the implementation of the strengthened safeguards system. We congratulate the Director General on having now brought forward to the Board of Governors for approval additional protocols covering a total of 54 States, including among them a number of states with significant nuclear activities. We are pleased to see that 16 of these additional protocols have come into force. However, we are concerned that there remain many States which have, as yet, not signed additional protocols. Here again, we echo the call made by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union for all States which have not yet done so to conclude and bring into force additional protocols as soon as possible.
6. In the United Kingdom, we have taken a major step towards entry into force of our Additional Protocol through the enactment in May of this year of the Nuclear Safeguards Act. This new legislation provides us with the necessary domestic powers to meet our

Additional Protocol obligations. We are now in a position to bring our Additional Protocol into force and will do so as soon as the other parties are ready.

7. In the meantime, we have submitted to the Agency voluntary declarations of information that would have to be provided by the United Kingdom under the terms of our Additional Protocol. These have included declarations covering the period up to the end of 1998, and the calendar year 1999. The declarations have provided us with valuable experience that will stand us in good stead when our agreement does enter into force. I am pleased to see that the Secretariat have also reported that they have found our declarations helpful, in terms of “testing systems and procedures dealing with the receipt, processing and evaluation” of information.
8. The Secretariat is to be commended for continuing to take forward the very important work on integrated safeguards. The work to date is impressive, but there is more to be done. For example, we believe that the development and comparative evaluation of a number of alternative proposals for the integration of safeguards measures would provide a suitable basis for decisions on the acceptability of particular proposals. We are glad to see that this work is being pushed forward by the Secretariat, with continued input from SAGSI and Member States. We look forward to a more detailed paper being presented to the Board in due course.
9. In addition to our safeguards responsibilities, we continue to work on promoting transparency. In June of this year, the UK once again published its annual figures for holdings of civil plutonium, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium adopted in 1997. At the same time, on a national basis, we also published

figures on our holdings of civil high enriched uranium as at 31 December 1999, together with a figure for the amount of depleted, natural and low-enriched uranium in the civil nuclear fuel cycle. And as part of our efforts to be as transparent as possible about the interface between our civil and military programmes we have recently made public information on withdrawals of nuclear material from safeguards since 1978 under the UK/Euratom/IAEA Safeguards Agreement (INFCIRC/263). Provision of this information is allied to the commitment that future withdrawals from safeguards will be limited to small quantities of nuclear material not suitable for explosive purposes and that information on such withdrawals will also be made public.

10. The UK welcomes the decision last September by the Board of Governors concerning the oversight of neptunium and americium. We have responded to requests from the IAEA by providing information on exports of separated neptunium from the UK up to the end of 1999, and will provide the IAEA with annual reports on such exports for future years. Similarly, the UK has previously provided information on its past exports of separated americium and will be updating this information in response to the Secretariat's recent request. We very much share the view that the effectiveness of the Secretariat's efforts in respect of neptunium and americium depends on the participation and co-operation of the relevant States in the implementation of all the measures agreed by the Board.

11. Looking to the Agency's developing role in verification, the United Kingdom has been grateful for updates provided to the Board of Governors on negotiations involving Russia, the United States and the Agency on submitting to verification material designated as no longer required for military purposes. We look forward to further, more detailed information on this important initiative in due course.

Iraq and the DPRK

12. The UK welcomed the announcement by Dr Hans Blix at the end of last month that UNMOVIC is now ready to begin work in Iraq. We call on Iraq to allow the IAEA and UNMOVIC in immediately. As soon as Iraq begins co-operating, it will be on the road towards the suspension and eventual lifting of sanctions, something we all want to see.
13. We remain seriously concerned by the continuing refusal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to co-operate fully with the Agency. We urge the DPRK to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement as soon as possible. Only then will the international community have confidence in its intentions. We hope that the welcome progress which has been made since the landmark North-South summit in June will be reflected in a more positive attitude by DPRK to arms control issues.

Nuclear Safety

14. Mr. President, the Agency continues to play an active role in the area of nuclear safety. We continue to support the Agency's efforts in this field and, in particular, would like to stress the importance the UK places on the IAEA's work on safety standards. We believe this work should continue to be given a high priority within the nuclear safety programme. We particularly welcome the moves to develop fuel cycle safety standards. Such new standards will be of particular benefit to Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in helping them meet the objectives of the Convention. In addition, the standards would complement those already in place for nuclear power plants.

15. The Joint Convention itself represents a major step in ensuring that spent fuel and radioactive waste are managed by Contracting Parties world-wide in ways that achieve high levels of safety and which protect individuals, society and the environment from the harmful effects of ionising radiation. The United Kingdom was one of the first signatories of the Convention. We are committed to the aims of the Convention and to the peer review process that it requires. We look forward to participating in the Preparatory Meeting for the reviews of national reports, and, indeed in the reviews themselves.

Technical Co-operation

16. The United Kingdom continues to be a strong supporter of the Agency's Technical Co-operation activities. As usual, in 2000 the UK has once again paid 100% of its target contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund, and has made additional voluntary contributions to the Agency covering a number of specific areas of the Agency's work.

17. We are pleased to see that agreement has been reached in the Board of Governors on the financing of technical co-operation for the next few years. We welcome in particular the mechanism adopted to encourage those States who do not already pay their Technical Co-operation Fund target contributions in full to increase their contributions in line with a progressive rate of attainment formula. Once again, we reiterate the call made by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union, for all States to pay their TC Fund contributions, and Assessed Programme Costs, in full and on time.

Statute Amendment

18. Last year the United Kingdom welcomed the decisions by the General Conference to amend two parts of the Agency's Statute: Article VI, dealing with the size and

composition of the Board of Governors, and Article XIV, allowing biennial budgeting. For its part the United Kingdom has completed the necessary parliamentary procedures, and will shortly be writing to the depository State to notify them that we have ratified the changes to the Statute. We call on all States which have not yet done so to make every effort to allow early entry into force of these changes to the Statute.

Budget / MOU / PIs

19. Mr. President, the Agency has many activities. Ensuring that the best use is made of the available resources is of fundamental importance. We welcome the new approach to programme and budgeting introduced by the Secretariat and look forward to playing a full and active role in helping the Secretariat determine its priorities for the coming biennium. We also welcome the introduction of performance indicators to help both the Secretariat and member States gauge how much progress is made towards achieving the Agency's goals. We repeat our call on the Secretariat for them to continue to develop this work, producing performance indicators which are both representative of the work and measurable. However, we recognise that the Secretariat cannot measure how it performs against its performance indicators without help from the member States. We stand ready to do our best to provide any information that the Secretariat requests from us as necessary to help it measure its performance.

20. In seeking to achieve best value for money, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are other organisations working in the nuclear field. We welcome the Agency's elaboration of a Memorandum of Understanding with the OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency. This memorandum, which builds on the 1960 co-operation agreement between the two organisations, will help to prevent unnecessary duplication of the activities of the

Agencies, and will offer access to the results of the Nuclear Energy Agency's work for the IAEA and its member States. We congratulate the Secretariat on taking this work forward and look forward to the speedy conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Conclusion.

21. Finally, Mr. President, the United Kingdom would like to thank the Director-General and his staff for all the hard work they have put in this year towards the effective running of the Agency, and for the initiatives they have launched and taken forward to improve the workings of the Agency. These are changing times, and the Agency has to adapt to new situations and new opportunities, whilst at the same time living within tight budgetary constraints. From a personal point of view, I very much look forward to taking part in discussions about how the Agency's work can be taken forward over the next few years.

22. I would like to close by pledging my support, and the continuing support of the United Kingdom, to the activities of the Agency in the coming year.