

# **47<sup>TH</sup> IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 2003**

## **PLENARY**

### **STATEMENT BY UNITED KINGDOM**

#### **[AS DELIVERED]**

Thank you Madam Chair

I would like to associate the United Kingdom fully with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Italy on behalf of the European Union. I would like to join him, and other speakers, in congratulating the President on his election as the President of this Conference. We are confident that, under his wise guidance and that of his colleagues, this Conference will be successful in accomplishing its work. You have my assurance, Madam Chair, of the full co-operation of my delegation.

The United Kingdom recognises the value in all areas of the Agency's work. For us, however, the most important aspect is its contribution to the worldwide campaign against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

#### **NUCLEAR VERIFICATION**

The risks of nuclear proliferation are changing and increasing. In this uncertain world, it is more important than ever that the Agency has the tools it needs to carry out its verification activities effectively. It is also essential that the Agency squares up to whatever challenges arise with rigour and determination, and that the Board of Governors provides real leadership and direction.

We are grateful to the Safeguards Department for another year of valuable work, recorded in the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2002. We attach the highest importance to the assurances that the Agency is able to offer about the non-diversion of nuclear material.

It is only the combined implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols that can provide the basis for the Agency to make statements about the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities. We therefore regret to note from the Director General's own report to this Conference that progress 'continues to lag well behind expectations'. We reiterate what we, and many others, said at this year's NPT Preparatory Committee. It is important and urgent that comprehensive safeguards agreements including an Additional Protocol become the norm for safeguards. Such truly comprehensive safeguards are especially important for those States with significant nuclear programmes which include or are developing enrichment or reprocessing capabilities.

The United Kingdom is pleased to be able to assist the Secretariat in its efforts to help Member States in their implementation of the Protocol, by hosting a technical meeting in London next month on the revision of the Additional Protocol Guidelines. We also pledge to help fund the Integrated Safeguards Information System re-engineering project, in addition to the consultancy support that we already provide for safeguards.

I want to refer briefly to three countries which demonstrate the importance of the Agency's role in preventing proliferation.

## **IRAQ**

The deployment of inspectors to Iraq to investigate claims of widespread looting of nuclear material highlights the need for the Agency to be able to respond to events at short notice. I would like to thank the Agency staff who deployed to Iraq and analysed the results of the deployment, ultimately being able to reassure the international community that “the quantity and type of uranium compounds dispersed are not sensitive from a proliferation point of view”.

## **DPRK**

The UK continues to support the multilateral talks process taking place in Beijing as the best route towards a peaceful resolution of the nuclear situation on the Korean peninsula. We deplore the statement released by North Korea only days after the last round of talks in which it said it had no further interest in the talks. This approach hardly seems conducive to maintaining and furthering the process. An essential part of any settlement will be to bring the DPRK back into compliance with its NPT obligations, including its safeguards agreement. We support a role for the IAEA in verifying the transparent, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the DPRK’s nuclear programmes, called for by so much of the international community.

## **IRAN**

The Board of Governors held an extremely important meeting in Vienna last week which was dominated by the issue of Iran’s nuclear programme. The United Kingdom

strongly welcomes the resolution which was agreed at that meeting. We expect Iran to comply with all its provisions.

I have said a good deal about the reasons why the Agency's verification work is so important. This was why the United Kingdom was one of those Member States that led the argument for a substantial, justified, increase in funding for the work of the Safeguards Department. We are delighted that an agreement on a budget package, which incorporates such an increase, has been agreed. It is of course essential that the full increase to be phased over 4 years is implemented in future budget decisions.

## **NUCLEAR SECURITY**

Madam Chair, the Agency's nuclear security work is also a crucial part of the counter-proliferation toolbox. The attacks of 11 September 2001 demonstrated the readiness of international terrorists to use new means of attack to inflict mass casualties; these new means of attack potentially include radiological and nuclear weapons or facilities housing them. As a result, the international community must co-operate in a programme to reduce the risk of WMD proliferation arising from nuclear material and to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear or radiological materials or sabotaging nuclear facilities or materials. This programme should also strengthen co-operation to prevent attacks of this type and promote international co-operation to deal with the consequences of them. The Agency is uniquely placed to carry out this role.

We call on Member States to continue to provide funding to sustain the Nuclear

Security Programme pending the proposed review of the funding mechanism. To date the United Kingdom has pledged £750,000 towards the Nuclear Security Fund over 3 years. Two thirds of that has been paid and we expect that the remaining £250,000 will be paid in early 2004. For the future, we intend to participate actively in the review of the funding mechanism in the context of planning the Programme and Budget for 2006-7.

The UK welcomes the work carried out by the Secretariat and by Member States to revise the draft Action Plan for the safety and security of radioactive sources.

The United Kingdom played a key role in the negotiation of the revised Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and we are fully supportive of it. Once implemented, the Code will significantly strengthen international co-operation and control over radioactive sources.

## **NUCLEAR SAFETY**

Madam Chair, we welcome the Agency's efforts to promote high and consistent levels of nuclear safety. The UK civil nuclear industry and Government take very seriously their responsibilities towards ensuring the safety of nuclear activities at nuclear installations both with regard to the workforce and the wider public.

It is also a top priority for the United Kingdom to ensure that very high standards of safety are developed and applied to the transport of radioactive material.

We appreciate that several Member States have concerns about such transport activity, focusing in particular on the transport of nuclear materials by sea. It is very important to inform people about the facts about such shipments and to try to address concerns that people may have. That is why we very much welcomed July's International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material. All the relevant issues were scrutinised carefully by experts and the conclusions were very clear and very reassuring.

We hope that event, along with the extensive international research that has been undertaken on the safety of transport of nuclear materials and the strongly positive conclusions of the recent IAEA TranSAS mission to the UK, will serve to reassure people that shipments carried out by the UK represent no significant risk.

## **TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION**

Madam Chair, I have talked about nuclear verification, security and safety being high priorities for the United Kingdom. We also support the right of Member States to use nuclear technology for legitimate, peaceful purposes. That is why we support of the Agency's Technical Co-operation activities.

Technical Co-operation is not the highest of priorities for the UK in the sense that we ourselves expect to benefit from the work that the Agency carries out. But, because we support the right of others to do so, we have again shown our full commitment to Technical Cooperation by paying 100% of our target Technical Co-operation Fund contributions.

The TC Report for 2002 records concern about the dwindling level of actual payments being made by Member States. This is a cause of disappointment to the United Kingdom. The Agency's work in implementing Technical Cooperation ought not to be hampered by the lack of financial commitment of Member States. We strongly urge other Member States to pay their target TC Fund contributions in full and on time. We also urge Member States whose Assessed Programme Costs are in arrears to pay these off as soon as possible.

## **INTERNAL CHANGE**

Madam Chair, if the Agency is to achieve the vital objectives I have described it must be an effective, efficient and forward-looking body. That is why my delegation has been actively engaged with the Secretariat's proposals for identifying scope for internal efficiencies and for managed change within the Agency. We contributed £75,000 towards the cost of the management consultancy study undertaken by Mannet, which reported its findings last Autumn. We are pleased that other Member States were able to support the cost of this study, and that the Agency is taking forward the recommendations of this work.

It is essential that the Agency embraces change and that it continues to evolve as an efficient organisation. It is for that reason that we have remained engaged with the Secretariat with a view to providing further extra-budgetary support for continued consultancy work. The United Kingdom is pleased to be able to offer an amount of up

to \$100,000 by March 2004, subject to receiving specific proposals from the Secretariat.

## **THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

Madam Chair, this last year has been a difficult one for the Agency. We congratulate the Director General and his colleagues on the way in which they have responded to the severe challenges of the last year. We also welcome the Director General's ideas about future developments in counter proliferation techniques. The suggestion he made in his statement yesterday [on Monday] about the new approaches to the design and management of the nuclear fuel cycle deserves further study, though there would obviously be major practical issues to be addressed.

Next year will also present great challenges. We expect a significant increase in the number of Member States whose Additional Protocols will enter into force. The Agency will therefore be better placed to provide assurances about the non-diversion of nuclear material in these States. The United Kingdom's own Additional Protocol, which we have followed in practice for some time, will come formally into force. We look forward to the Agency becoming even more effective in its work to prevent nuclear proliferation; and to a continued process of internal change which will enhance the effectiveness of all of its activities.

Thank you, Madam Chair.