

IAEA General Conference 2008 Statement by Norway

Mr President,

Norway agrees with the main thrust of France's statement on behalf of the EU. I will therefore focus on the 2020 report in my intervention.

In Norway's view, the 2020 report provides a sound basis for our discussions on the future of the IAEA. We share the Commission's view that given the prospect of increased use of nuclear energy worldwide, the IAEA's role in the field of non-proliferation, safety and security will become even more important.

The Agency must be fully equipped to perform its main tasks. It should focus on its comparative advantages and at the same time pursue new partnerships with other actors and stakeholders.

Mr President,

Safeguards are fundamental for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Norway underlines that the IAEA must have the necessary access, information and resources to safeguard Member States' peaceful nuclear programmes. It must have the tools required for evaluating evidence and information at the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory and cooperating laboratories in an objective, safe and timely manner.

Member States will facilitate the Agency's task by implementing Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocol. This will greatly enhance international confidence that there are no undeclared nuclear activities

on their territories. Further, it is the only way countries will qualify for integrated safeguards, saving time and resources for the Agency and themselves.

Regretfully, many countries are holding out. Norway urges the remaining States to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol. In this respect we also appeal to Iran to fully implement the Additional Protocol as well as any other transparency measures deemed necessary by the IAEA. This was also reiterated by the Security Council in resolution 1835, which was adopted unanimously last week.

We expect the full cooperation of all countries under IAEA investigation. Full transparency is essential to restore international confidence.

Mr President,

As stated in the 2020 report, the IAEA must play a key role in efforts to identify credible and legitimate multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle.

We are confident that market mechanisms will to a large extent meet demands for civilian nuclear fuel. Yet, in order to alleviate any concerns regarding long-term predictability, we should devise various types of international cooperative efforts.

As a first step, Norway is committed to supporting the establishment of a fuel bank under IAEA auspices. We acknowledge the generous contributions made by other Member States such as the United States, and most recently by the United Arab Emirates. We encourage others to provide political and financial support to an IAEA fuel bank.

Mr President,

We fully agree with the 2020 Report that the expected increase in the use of nuclear energy will pose new challenges when it comes to the safety of our citizens, workers and the environment. If the situation calls for it, we must stand ready to prevent, mitigate and respond to any danger that may arise and to alert other countries.

Norway has long advocated better international coordination of response measures. We highly value the IAEA's assistance in the development and implementation of safety principles and norms, which we consider a core responsibility of the Agency. In this regard Norway has underlined the importance of ensuring sufficient and predictable financial resources for the IAEA's important work in this area.

Mr President,

While nuclear security is a national responsibility, terrorists know no national borders. Norway advocates the universalisation of all relevant conventions and guidelines for preventing nuclear terrorism and strongly supports the IAEA's efforts to assist member states in the implementation of these instruments.

Norway values the Agency's readiness to work together with other organisations and initiatives, such as the G8 Global Partnership, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and, most recently, the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS). This is a true indication of the kind of partnership that is being called for by the 2020 Commission. Norway has decided to support the establishment of WINS because we recognise the importance of industry awareness and involvement and are concerned that all interested parties should have the opportunity to participate in this effort.

Mr President,

Promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and technology is at the heart of the IAEA's mandate. Safe water supplies, better crops, nuclear diagnostics and medicine, as well as energy planning, are just a few of the areas where the Agency provides assistance. We reiterate that the IAEA must take its share of the responsibility for meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals. Here, too, close partnership with other UN agencies is of vital importance. In this respect, we welcome the close cooperation with organisations such as WHO and FAO.

Our position on nuclear energy is well known. We fully support Article IV of the NPT. We respect every nation's sovereign right to choose its own energy mix, but it must not be at the expense of our common security or safety. The Agency should be ready to assist in the overall assessment of the options of Member States that request assistance in energy planning. Nuclear energy may not necessarily be the answer.

Mr President,

Norway notes the Commission's concern that lack of progress in disarmament may undermine the IAEA's non-proliferation mission. We clearly see the link between nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. However, as we have said previously, any perceived lack of progress in disarmament must not be used as an excuse not to seek universal adherence to improved safeguards. A credible non-proliferation regime will clearly enhance our collective security. It is also a precondition for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

However, Norway has repeatedly expressed concern that progress towards nuclear disarmament is too slow. There are still far too many nuclear weapons in the world, nearly 20 years after the end of the Cold War. We are concerned that a key instrument such as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty has not entered

into force, and that the much needed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty negotiations have not even got off the ground.

Norway has called on the States concerned to accelerate disarmament in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner. We will continue to advocate multilateral instruments designed to prevent a potential new nuclear arms race.

Verification is at the heart of safeguards and of any successful disarmament process. Norway supports the Commission's recommendation to involve IAEA experts in consultations on an FMCT verification regime and on safeguards of fissile materials no longer required for military purposes. Once the Democratic People's Republic Korea process is back on track, the IAEA should monitor the dismantlement of the country's former nuclear programme.

Mr President,

To conclude, the 2020 report gives us an opportunity to strengthen the IAEA with a view to enhancing international security and safety and promoting sustainable development.

We must seize this opportunity.