

UK National Statement to the IAEA 65th General Conference 2021

Mr President,

Congratulations on your appointment as President of this Conference.

To begin, I'd like to speak about the biggest threat facing our planet today - climate change. The UK is, of course, COP26 President, and the whole of the UK Government is focused on the critical Glasgow summit later this year.

The latest IPCC report - showing the impact humans have had on our planet - is a wake-up call, highlighting the need for drastic, dramatic action now, to protect the earth for generations to come. Safe and secure nuclear power will be an important component in our plans to reach net zero.

And so we must think differently and embrace innovation – coming together to champion the wide opportunities that all nuclear technologies offer. That is why, at the end of 2020, the UK Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan set out our aim to approve at least one more large-scale nuclear power plant by 2024, In addition to the £385m we have committed to unlock the opportunities of advanced nuclear technologies.

Stepping away from climate change, the UK is also proud, Mr. President, of the progress we have collectively made to ensure that nuclear is one of the safest energy generation technologies. We commend the IAEA for its role in helping countries to develop their nuclear industries to the highest standards of safety and security.

The UK also continues to back the Agency's efforts to strengthen and enhance the nuclear safeguards system. We call upon all states that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol. We strongly believe that these Safeguards agreements, together with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, have successfully deterred many countries from seeking nuclear weapons, providing the key framework and enabler for the peaceful uses of nuclear.

With that in mind, we have consistently demonstrated our commitment to the JCPoA, and are working for the full restoration of the agreement. Our priority is to see the US return to the deal, and Iran to return to compliance with its commitments. We urge Iran to return to negotiations as soon as possible for a swift conclusion of the deal and reverse the extremely dangerous trajectory of its nuclear programme, and to restore the access that the Agency requires to give the international community assurances that Iran's nuclear programme is a peaceful one.

We commend the Director General for his tireless efforts to engage with Iran on the separate investigation on Iran's declarations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement. We welcome the agreement between the Agency and Iran, which confirms that consultations with the new Iranian government will take place on outstanding issues. It is important that Iran swiftly implements this agreement and meaningfully engages with the Agency.

Mr President, The UK commends the Director General for his unwavering commitment to nuclear science and research, and I am proud to pledge over 4 million euros to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund.

The technologies we are uncovering today are key to solving the most pressing global development challenges of our time, and it is our responsibility to deliver these to those who need it most.

We also share the Director General's vision and commitment to improving gender diversity across the nuclear field. The phenomenal contributions of women to nuclear science and research cannot be understated. That is why the UK has pledged 500 thousand Euros to the Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme. I urge all Member States to follow suit and do more to inspire future generations of women into the nuclear sector.

Mr. President, as the UK looks towards hosting COP26 in Glasgow later this year, I would like to personally thank the Agency for its dedication to climate action.

I would like to highlight the bid from the United Kingdom's Supreme Audit Institution, the National Audit Office (NAO) for the role of the External Auditor for the IAEA.

The NAO is a professional, experienced External Auditor - with over 60 years of experience across the United Nations - and will provide high quality assurance over the use of the Agency's resources and advice on how the Agency can deliver its important mandate more efficiently and effectively.

We believe the NAO's experience and expertise makes them a strong candidate for this role and we hope Member States will support their bid

Finally, let me emphasise Mr. President, the UK will continue to give the Secretariat, and the Director General, our full and wholehearted support.

Thank you very much.