



**United Kingdom  
Permanent Representation  
to the  
Conference on Disarmament**

**Cluster III Statement  
to the 2009 Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee**

**by  
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Organisations in Vienna**

**NEW YORK, 8 May 2009**



Mr. Chairman,

The United Kingdom fully associates itself with and supports the statement made by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to add some further remarks.

The United Kingdom does not seek to persuade other countries to adopt nuclear energy. That is a decision for individual sovereign governments. Even within the European Union national attitudes to nuclear energy vary considerably.

After lengthy analysis and debate, the United Kingdom believes that we will not meet the twin challenges of climate change and security of energy supply without the far wider use of civil nuclear power. This should not be at the expense of investment in other low- carbon energy but, given the scale of the global emissions reductions that are required, and the likely cost, no cost-effective low-carbon technology must be off-limits. The complete life-cycle emissions from nuclear power, from uranium mining to waste management, are only between 2% and 6% of those from gas for every unit of electricity generated.

The International Atomic Energy Agency estimates that we must build 32 nuclear reactors globally every year if we are to halve emissions by 2050. This is an enormous and urgent challenge on several fronts. But it is a challenge that we cannot avoid. It is also a global challenge that will see us succeed together or fail separately.

Collectively the international community needs to address the safety and security of fissile material and the handling of spent nuclear fuel. We need to ensure those countries that wish have the opportunity to access safe and secure civil nuclear power. For many the sheer cost and technological complexity of developing national nuclear fuel cycle technology would be insurmountable. And we need to make sure that regional and international security is not jeopardised by increased proliferation risks.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

It is now six years since the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr Mohamed el-Baradei highlighted the need for multilateral co-operation on the nuclear fuel cycle to resolve the challenges posed by the growth in use of nuclear energy.

The UK's own proposal, the Nuclear Fuel Assurance, seeks to provide for the continuation of enrichment services in the event that they are stopped due to political reasons. With the IAEA as a co-signatory, the concept is also applicable to supplies of uranium ore and of fuel rods. The objective of this and other proposals is to create an internationally agreed regime with oversight by the IAEA, which will increase confidence in a functioning fuel supply market. It is designed to support the implementation of the right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to offer countries seeking nuclear power an alternative to investing in costly enrichment and re-processing technology.

A Nuclear Fuel Assurance would offer flexibility in terms of the precise agreement between supplier and recipient but with the confidence of IAEA engagement. It

would not distort the commercial market, could be set up quickly, and would be complementary to the other multilateral assurance proposals currently on the table. We would welcome further information on developments in this regard from the IAEA in due course.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

The United Kingdom has always firmly believed that such cooperation can provide further confidence in what is already a well functioning global market. But we also recognise the desire of many states for an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach that takes account of individual needs. We have therefore encouraged, and continue to promote, discussion and debate.

In March we hosted a major international conference with the aim of deepening the dialogue and identifying areas of common concern. The size and diversity of the gathering, drawn from every continent, was an impressive and truly global demonstration of the strength of the international community's ambition to secure peaceful nuclear power for those who want it and to reduce and remove from it the dangers of nuclear weapons.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty provides the framework and principles for the safe and secure global expansion of civil nuclear energy. Its Article IV enshrines the right for States Party to acquire civil nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Articles II and III set out the non-proliferation and verification obligations.

The United Kingdom believes there is much more we can do together to strengthen these rights and obligations, thereby underpinning our common economic, environmental, security and social interests.

Gordon Brown the British Prime Minister in his speech on 17 March committed the United Kingdom to playing a leading role in bringing forward proposals for multilateral control of the nuclear fuel cycle. We will give renewed impetus to research and development to tackle the technical changes that are involved in developing a proliferation-proof nuclear fuel cycle. We will give greater focus to multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle that include the so-called "back end", including addressing the challenges of spent nuclear fuel in a more secure way.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues

In each of the United Kingdom's statements I have stressed the need to pursue a progressive internationalism in pursuit of the common objectives we seek. The challenges in a rapidly globalising world have changed but too often the approaches and mindsets have not. We need to articulate the challenges, to shape them and address them creatively and proactively.

Whatever the multilateral mechanisms that evolve to facilitate implementation of Article IV rights and reinforce compliance with Article II obligations, we must have the transcending principle that the expansion of civil nuclear power take place in a culture of openness, confidence and transparency. No country should have to look over its shoulder in concern at what its neighbour might be doing. Security of energy

supply should enhance not diminish the security of others. To embed such a culture, a collaborative approach, particularly at a regional level, has much to commend it both as a confidence-building measure and to achieve economies of scale.

The United Kingdom encourages those countries embarking on civil nuclear programmes for the first time to consider this and other multilateral options. As my Prime Minister said, “let this be a journey of hope in which hard-headed co-operation defines our modern age”.

Thank you.

