Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Cluster III issues

Statement by Finland
H.E. Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen

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Mr Chair,

In addition to the statement by the European Union and the statement delivered by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of Ten, I am pleased to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The NPT assures an inalienable right of all states parties to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, without discrimination. It also constitutes a framework for safeguards that are fundamental for maintaining confidence in the peaceful nature of nuclear activities and for preventing nuclear proliferation.

Thanks to the NPT, nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear technologies are available also to non-nuclear weapon states. For Finland, this has been very important indeed. Today, one third of our electricity production is based on nuclear power – with the share soon set to rise to 40 per cent.

Nuclear technologies can bring enormous benefits to millions of people worldwide. They can play an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in a number of fields: energy, health, medicine, food and agriculture, water, to name a few. Nuclear power can help countries in assuring the security of their energy supply, and in reaching agreed emission targets. Nuclear energy can make an important contribution to climate change mitigation, as also noted by the IAEA in its recent report. Finland is happy to support the IAEA Technical Cooperation programme, contributing to these important goals, through annual contributions.

Mr Chair,

To fully benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, states need to have the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards in place, and commit fully to non-proliferation in line with NPT obligations. For Finland, these have always been guiding principles. We urge all states to show their commitment to non-proliferation, with maximal transparency, by signing and ratifying the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements.
A sound legislative framework for nuclear and radiation safety, an independent, competent and well-resourced regulatory body, and responsible licensees are an essential foundation for the safe use of nuclear energy. This must be complemented by effective control of nuclear material and the fuel cycle, as well as a responsible nuclear waste management strategy.

Responsible use of nuclear energy requires that waste management is given due consideration already at the start of a nuclear power development programme. Licensing and regulation should cover the whole life cycle of the plant, from design to decommissioning and disposal of spent nuclear fuel. This is the case in Finland.

Finland is in the forefront in developing nuclear waste disposal: The first geological repository in the world for spent nuclear fuel is currently under construction in Finland. This pioneer status comes with a special responsibility to ensure that the highest technological, safety and safeguards standards are adhered to.

The geological disposal of spent nuclear fuel presents new and unique challenges for the implementation of nuclear safeguards. Responses to these are developed in close technical cooperation (so called Safeguards-by Design process) with the IAEA and the European Commission.

Finland has invested considerably in developing national expertise to ensure that all the above-mentioned elements are in place. These are key principles also in our international cooperation on nuclear energy. Through our bilateral safeguards support programme with the IAEA we have lent our expertise to the Agency and to the benefit of its member states – for over 30 years. We are committed to sharing our experience and know-how also on a bilateral basis, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration.

With more and more international cooperation in the civil nuclear field, and an increasing number of actors involved, we find it important to explore good practices with a view to developing a model framework agreement for intergovernmental cooperation. For this reason we are pleased to support the working paper submitted by France.
Nuclear security remains mainly each state's national responsibility. International cooperation can, however, assist in our common effort to prevent unauthorised use of nuclear and radioactive material. Finland takes an active part in initiatives to enhance nuclear security worldwide, including as the current international coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. We are also a longstanding contributor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund.

To conclude, Mr Chair,

The development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy contains enormous potential, but also necessitates a high degree of responsibility from the states seeking to utilise it. Here, too, the NPT is our prime frame of reference and the essential foundation for all our work.