

**Second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review
Conference
(Geneva 28th April – 9th May 2008)**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Jean-François DOBELLE
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Head of the French Delegation**

Chapter 3

Mr Chairman,

1. The French Delegation first wishes to associate itself with the declaration made by the Slovenian Presidency in the name of the European Union.

Mr Chairman,

2. There is in the world an increasing demand for recourse to nuclear energy, especially in developing countries. This increasing interest in civil nuclear energy is based on solid reasons.
3. These reasons are firstly economic and energy centred. Today, the increase in the price of hydrocarbons and the prospect of the depletion of resources are encouraging many countries to turn to new sources of energy. Many countries are also concerned by the security of their energy supply. Nuclear energy enables us to respond to this demand by reducing the recourse to fossil energies, where reserves are today limited, by offering a widely available source of energy which is economic and also respectful of the environment.
4. This is the second major reason for the increasing interest in civil nuclear energy. Unlike fossil energies, nuclear energy produces neither greenhouse gases nor air pollution. Nuclear energy has an essential contribution to make to sustainable development: in the fields of health, food supply and agriculture, access to water and energy and protection of the environment.
5. We cannot ignore this urgent and legitimate demand. The international community must respond to it, while limiting the risks of proliferation associated in particular with the fuel cycle. This is a major issue for the present cycle of review of the NPT.

6. Each of us has made the commitment, under article IV of the treaty, to facilitate the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. France is working to give full scope to the provisions of article IV of the treaty and to respect its commitment to develop civil nuclear co-operation within the framework of this article.
7. My country will ensure that the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy recognised by article IV is not misused but fully respected and promoted by countries which manifestly respect their international obligations and pursue activities for peaceful ends in good faith.
8. Although my country fully supports the inalienable right of States, recognised by article IV of the NPT, to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it nevertheless considers that this right is not unconditional. In the very terms of the treaty, its exercise is conditioned by peaceful purposes, which respect commitments to non-proliferation and satisfactory implementation of the IAEA guarantees.
9. Thus, a State which failed to meet its obligations in respect of non-proliferation and implementation of IAEA guarantees or in which the peaceful aims of nuclear activities could not be established, could not invoke the stipulations of article IV. For example, a State which developed sensitive activities of the cycle without any civil rationality nor any credible economic justification would be exposed to strong suspicions concerning the true aims of its nuclear programme. The fact is that the right to peaceful use should not be circumvented in order to use technologies, equipment or nuclear material for purposes contrary to the aims of the treaty.
10. Fortunately, for the immense majority of the States party to the treaty, in particular developing States, the question of respect of the NPT, or that of peaceful aims, does not arise. It is in their interest, in order to fully preserve their rights, that we show no weakness with those who fail to observe the common rule.
11. At a time when more and more countries wish to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, France, in accordance with the commitments it has made under article IV, is ready to respond to these expectations by making available its recognized expertise to any country which scrupulously observes the whole of its nuclear non-proliferation commitments and in particular those resulting from the NPT. My country is in fact convinced that the responsible development of civil nuclear energy, with full compliance with the most stringent standards of safety, security and non proliferation, will contribute to implementation of the NPT and reinforce the legitimacy of the non-proliferation plan.

12. In an address to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change on the 24th of September 2007, the French President stressed that : “France is ready to help any country which wants to acquire civil nuclear energy. We can’t have an energy for the future for the Western countries and have Eastern countries which can’t get access to it.”
13. With 59 reactors in operation providing more than 78% of its electricity production, with its mastery of the whole of the fuel cycle, from uranium extraction and fuel production up to fuel reprocessing/recycling, with its third generation reactor, the EPR, with its improved industrial and environmental performances and even greater safety levels, France has all the expertise necessary to help countries which wish to equip themselves with an electro nuclear capability. For more than 30 years now, it has pursued a responsible energy policy and has developed major facilities designed to overcome the challenges of radioactive waste management issues. France is continuing its efforts in the field of research with the new research reactor, the Jules Horowitz Reactor (RJH), which will be built on the Cadarache site.
14. France intends to share its experience in this field. In this way, my country is cooperating with an increasing number of other countries, at their request, demonstrating its commitment in favour of the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the application of article IV of the treaty.
15. In this respect, France pays particular attention to the requirements expressed by developing countries. We have committed ourselves to long-term partnerships with several of these countries, in particular with a number of North African and Middle Eastern countries.

Mr Chairman,

In spite of all this however, we cannot ignore the fact that the proliferation crises which have occurred in North Korea and Iran, resulting from violation of the obligations of the Treaty by these two States, have shaken the confidence of the international community. These conditions of confidence must be re-established in order to ensure the full and complete application of article IV. This means the resolution of the Iranian and North Korean crises, which must be settled as a matter of the greatest urgency.

16. In order to re-establish these conditions of confidence, we must also promote the responsible development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

17. This is the purpose of French actions in the field of civil nuclear energy; all its cooperation projects are carried out with the strictest compliance with the most stringent standards of non-proliferation, safety and security.

Mr Chairman,

18. We cannot ignore the specific risks associated with the development of nuclear energy. This development raises essential issues for collective security.

19. We must increase confidence in the capacity of the international community to discourage those who wish to develop nuclear energy for purposes other than peaceful ones. If this is not the case, we may encourage countries to consider that their security would be better served by the development of similar capacities rather than by the compliance with international standards of non-proliferation.

20. To ensure the security of each of our States, we must promote the responsible development of civil nuclear energy in a multilateral, transparent and stringent framework, based on consolidated international cooperation which guarantees that sensitive technologies and assets are not misused for purposes other than peaceful ones.

21. Among the different conditions for the development of civil nuclear energy, **the compliance with non-proliferation obligations** is more than ever one of the major challenges facing the international community. It is essential that each of us fully observes all the obligations in this field, whether they result in particular from the NPT or from the resolutions of the Security Council.

22. I must stress : It is not for us to choose between the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and the development of civil nuclear energy. The development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation are not contradictory, but on the contrary, go hand in hand.

23. Technical guarantees enable us to counter the risk of proliferation. Because nuclear energy is not like a solid block: Certain technologies in the nuclear fuel cycle are structurally open to risks of proliferation; others are not.

24. In this respect, I would remind you that all the recent proliferation crises were due to the use of upstream (enrichment) or downstream (reprocessing) technologies used in

the cycle. Because of this, the export of these most sensitive technologies, since they can be used for both civil or military ends, must meet the strictest criteria: This is what France has been proposing for several years within non-proliferation forums. We are not talking here about preventing export of these technologies but on the contrary, of enabling their export by containing it.

25. This is also the idea behind our nuclear export policy. France's policy in this field is quite clear. It consists of making a distinction between on the one hand the supply of reactors based on a non-proliferating technology (light water reactors) and the supply of the fuel required for the operation, and on the other hand, the export of enrichment and reprocessing cycle technologies. France's policy is to only export these sensitive technologies in particular circumstances that are economically justified and present no risk of weakening the international non proliferation regime.

26. We must work together to promote pragmatic short or medium-term solutions to prevent the risks of dissemination of sensitive technologies. To achieve this, during this cycle we must explore the avenues of efficient and transparent export controls, realistic multilateral mechanisms in order to guarantee the supply of nuclear fuel, faultless security and the technologies which are the most resistant to proliferation.

27. In particular, France actively supports the implementation of a multilateral mechanism for the supply of nuclear fuel, which could for example take the form of a fuel bank, capable of guaranteeing continuous access for each State to nuclear fuel for its reactors. France wishes to promote pragmatic and concrete solutions, which respect market conditions and the requirements of beneficiary countries. It is in particular important that the industrial offer made to countries wishing to develop electro nuclear capabilities should include long-term fuel supply contracts.

28. I would also remind you that France wishes to see the universal application of the additional protocol, today adopted by more than 80 countries, which gives increased powers to the IAEA in its mission of verification of the nuclear activities of different States.

Mr Chairman,

29. Our security also depends on the ability of those States which have made the choice of civil nuclear energy to carry out their projects in compliance with the most stringent **safety and security conditions.**

30. As an exporting country, France intends to pursue its full responsibilities in this respect. So it is that all civil nuclear cooperation agreements signed by France contain clauses concerning the peaceful uses of cooperation and the permanent application of IAEA controls to all nuclear materials used in the programmes developed in cooperation with France. In addition, the procedures for transfer of materials, technologies or equipment provided by France as part of the cooperation project are precisely determined in order to avoid any misuse in particular for terrorist purposes.
31. It is also vital for continued nuclear development to maintain a high level of safety. France stresses the importance which it attaches to the Convention on nuclear safety as well as to the Joint Convention on safety of spent fuel management and safety of radioactive waste management. Insofar as concerns transport safety, France carries on a continuous dialogue with its partners and the coastal States concerned, together with consultations aimed at improving mutual understanding and confidence with respect to the safety of maritime transport of radioactive material.
32. In particular, France intends to help countries which wish to provide themselves with electro nuclear capabilities with implementation of the framework and infrastructures necessary for the safe and efficient development of nuclear energy. We must be aware that commitment to a civil nuclear programme is a long-term choice, which requires a safe environment and therefore implies a special responsibility on behalf of the States concerned.
33. France is in the process of creating an agency specifically responsible for developing this type of operation. We give a particularly high priority to manpower training, which is essential in order to guarantee that the nuclear energy will be used under the best possible conditions.

Mr Chairman,

34. In parallel with its bilateral partnerships, France plays an active part in collective **international co-operation** projects in the field of civil nuclear energy.
35. International cooperation is essential for the conception of a new generation of safer, more competitive reactors, which will be more resistant to proliferation and generate less long-term radioactive waste. In particular France participates in the Generation IV International Forum, chaired by France at the present time.

36. In the field of fusion, I would like to point out that the ITER reactor will be installed on the European side at Cadarache in France; the administrative and technical organisation of the programme is going ahead rapidly.
37. France also participates in the IAEA project INPRO which offers an open forum for the study of electro nuclear options and can also provide additional and particularly interesting contributions in the field of evaluation methodologies for the benefit of countries who wish to use nuclear energy.
38. Concerning the GNEP initiative, which today involves 21 participants, France is pleased with the implementation of a governance structure and the organisation of the first Steering Committee meeting last December, as well as with the creation of two working groups on guarantees of supply and development of basic infrastructures. France will continue to support this partnership.
39. France has always attached to the greatest importance to promotion of the IAEA and strongly supports the technical cooperation programme. This commitment manifests itself in the form of the hosting of trainees and training programmes, in particular in the field of radio protection. France also directly funds large-scale projects and French specialists contribute to expert missions in many fields. Our commitment is particularly demonstrated by the full and regular payment of our contribution to the technical cooperation fund.

Mr Chairman,

40. The last requirement is that of **transparency**. Nuclear development cannot be envisaged without political will and the backing of citizens.
41. For its part, my country is determined to pursue the work of transparency which has already begun. In application of our international commitments, the export of nuclear material is subject to government authorisation. Our cooperation agreements, which define a cooperation framework but do not cover, as such, the supply of reactors or other nuclear equipment or installations, are widely disseminated and systematically forwarded to the European commission in accordance with the EURATOM treaty.
42. Concerning nuclear materials, France is a member of the group of countries which are signatories to guidelines adopted concerning the management of civil plutonium and in this respect publishes the status of its civil stocks of material each year. My country

is also convinced that the management of civil stocks of highly enriched uranium would be improved by the adoption of similar guidelines.

Mr Chairman,

43. The development of nuclear energy will be one of the outstanding achievements of this century. It is vital that we take up this challenge. The present cycle of review provides us with the occasion.
44. We must work together, as of now, to promote the responsible development of nuclear energy which will enable the community of nations to provide answers to the formidable economic human and environmental challenges with which we are faced.
45. This cannot be achieved without a climate of confidence. Creating this climate requires the assurance of continuing good faith with respect to nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes, the respect of non-proliferation commitments and increased safety and transparency.
46. The implementation of large scale international cooperation in a climate of confidence will enable the greatest possible number of countries to benefit from the peaceful applications of this energy of the future.

Thank you Mr Chairman,