



**2005 Review Conference
of the States Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear
Weapons**

Main Committee III

**Statement by H.E. Mr Patrick Villemur
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to the Office of the United Nations and International Organizations in
Vienna**

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**(Translated from French – Only the original French text may be considered
official)**

France, being very attached to the development of civilian atomic applications, has a special interest in the debate on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It intends to do all it can to give the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty their fullest scope.

Nuclear technologies provide major benefits to sustainable development in the fields of health, food and agriculture, access to water and energy, and protection of the environment in a context of sustainable development.

In the field of energy, the international nuclear landscape is experiencing a clear revitalisation in the countries that have chosen nuclear energy to provide for the sustainable development of their economy, considering particularly its advantages in terms of secure energy supply, of its contribution to combating climate change, of competitiveness and stability of prices. This is particularly true for developing countries.

This renewed perception of the advantages of nuclear energy has led the Director General of the IAEA to organise, in partnership with the AEN, a conference at ministerial level on the perspectives for nuclear energy in the 21st century, hosted by the French authorities in Paris on March 21 and 22 of this year. The high level of the debates and the quality of the speakers (74 States took part and 28 Ministers were present) made it possible to apprehend the full measure of the contribution that nuclear energy can make to the energy needs of the 21st century.

For its part France has, for more than 30 years now, been pursuing a responsible energy policy in the framework of diversified supply, a policy that relies heavily on the production of nuclear energy. In 2004, France's 59 operating reactors provided over 75% of its power production. The French authorities have reaffirmed that nuclear energy would keep a very significant place in the future French energy landscape, while giving an increasing role to renewable energies.

In this regard, they have chosen to authorise the construction of an industrial demonstrator of the European Pressurised Water Reactor, the EPR, a reactor that is cheaper to run and produces between 15 and 30% less wastes. This construction will provide sufficient feed-back to enable an informed decision around 2015-2020 for the replacement of the production capacity of power stations that will by then be coming to the end of their life cycle.

In this global context that is largely favourable to nuclear energy, international cooperation obviously has an essential role to play. Innovation – in the framework of international cooperation – is essential for designing a new generation of systems that are more competitive, even safer, generating less long-life radioactive wastes, more resistant to proliferation and capable of meeting both the world's energy needs and the concern for development that is both economically and socially sustainable. For this reason France is actively participating in the research and development programmes undertaken in the framework of the Generation IV Forum.

France has also decided to contribute as a fully-fledged member to IAEA's INPRO project. The effect of this project is to provide major methodological contributions to projects that seek to develop the nuclear technologies of the future, in particular in the fields of analysis of national needs and more particularly those of the countries that are gaining access to nuclear energy.

France considers that access to civilian nuclear technologies must benefit the largest possible number of States, providing that they respect their commitments to non-proliferation and the application of IAEA's safeguards, and that they pursue their activities in good faith for peaceful purposes. It is in this spirit that France is cooperating with a growing number of countries and institutions, thereby giving witness of its commitment on behalf of the promotion of peaceful atomic uses and the application of article IV of the Treaty. French action is seen at the international and national level as well as through initiatives undertaken by the European Union. It gives particular attention to the needs expressed by developing countries.

Right from the beginning, France has attached great importance to activities promoting the IAEA and vigorously supports the technical cooperation programme. This commitment is being worked out in the areas of expertise, the hosting of trainees and training courses, particularly in the field of radioprotection. Moreover France is providing direct funding for major projects and French specialists are contributing to expertise missions in multiple fields. Our commitment can also be seen in the full and regular payment of our contribution to the technical cooperation fund. We would invite all other States to do the same. The details of all the actions undertaken by France on behalf of international cooperation for the development of peaceful uses are in the brochure that the French delegation will be pleased to distribute.

The development and transfer of nuclear technologies must be seen from the perspective of long-term knowledge and skill management. The conference organised by the IAEA in September 2004 in France at Saclay was evidence of the dynamism of nuclear research and industry, and their mobilisation to make sure that they will have the skills and the specialists needed in the 21st century. France, which has been active in this regard for a long time, will continue to provide active, substantial and concrete support for the Agency's work with a view to defining a comprehensive strategy for this essential aspect of the future of nuclear energy.

Though France recognises the inalienable right of States – enshrined in article IV of the NPT – to benefit from the development of nuclear energy for peaceful ends and from international cooperation in this field, it nevertheless considers that this right can only be legitimately exercised through the scrupulous respect of the provisions of articles I and II and the safeguard provisions contained in article III of the Treaty, this being a fundamental condition for installing a climate of confidence. On the other hand, the right to nuclear energy may only be exercised if a State is pursuing, in compliance with the principle of good faith, “peaceful purposes”. Civilian nuclear cooperation is only possible if the States acquit themselves in good faith of the obligations deriving from the treaty. We are obliged to recognise that recent crises around the issue of proliferation and the non-respect of these commitments are likely to have a negative impact on the trust that is so essential for implementing fully the provisions of article IV.

The right to peaceful uses, that France is so attached to, cannot be allowed to serve as a pretext for wrongfully diverting nuclear technologies, equipment or material, any more than for clandestine activities that are contrary to the goals of the Treaty.

Thus among the conditions for the development of peaceful applications for nuclear technologies, the respect of obligations of non-proliferation and safety of nuclear materials constitutes more than ever one of the major challenges facing the international community.

To respond to both old and new challenges in this area, a comprehensive vision is needed that will take into account the central nature of the NPT, as well as the responsibilities of the Security Council, the role of international agreements and that of the nuclear suppliers, as well as any other objectives that contribute to the same goals, such as the PSI. In this regard, the G8 also has a major role to play. France wishes to recall that during the third session of the committee preparing this conference, in May 2004, it made available a working document, under the reference NPT/CONF.2005/PCIII/WP22.

An effective control of exports that is objective, transparent and non-discriminatory, an efficient system of safeguards that provides credible and reliable assurances, and a faultless safety and security system, together constitute the foundation for international action to prevent the risks of proliferation, of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive matter, and of possible acts of nuclear terrorism while combating non-State proliferation networks.

France wish simply to underscore once more the importance of respecting commitments made and of the necessary reinforcement of the system of safeguards resulting from the adoption, by a growing number of States, of additional protocols to their agreements with IAEA. My country is convinced of the irreplaceable role of the additional protocol in a reinforced control mechanism, the only one capable of providing effective assurances of non-proliferation. France, together with other States, is seeking to promote the adoption of the additional protocol as a condition for supplying and exporting the most sensitive technologies and products relating to the fuel cycle. France's commitment in this area is clear: we do not envisage cooperating on the fuel cycle with States that have not taken the highest level of commitment in the area of non-proliferation and the safeguards of pursuing in good faith peaceful purposes. France has taken note of the orientations recommended by the group of experts brought together by the Director General of the IAEA for the purpose of identifying possible multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle. It is pleased with the approach adopted, that is progressive yet rooted in the existing situation, which has made it possible to identify the options most capable of taking into account the diversity of regional situations and the needs of countries for whom the search of a single model has in the past been a source of failure.

France is willing to pursue the study of this subject in a framework to be decided by the Director General of the IAEA, in particular to reinforce the guarantees given by

the supplier countries as a complement of the industrial contracts with the beneficiary States that are not developing a fuel cycle industry.

The security and the safety of peaceful uses of nuclear energy constitute the second preliminary imperative for the development of cooperation. These concerns are at the heart of the public's perception of the multiple contributions that peaceful atomic applications can provide for the development of humanity.

The risk of nuclear or radioactive materials being used for terrorist goals constitutes indeed a grave menace against which the international community has been mobilised in order to further improve the already high level of protection surrounding nuclear activities, wherever it might be necessary.

Certainly, responsibilities in these areas are first and foremost incumbent on the States, but the latter must be able to rely effectively on international exchanges and cooperation. The IAEA naturally has an eminent role to play, in accordance with its status, regarding the safety of nuclear materials and installations. France supports the Agency's action programme that was adopted by the Board of Governors in 2002 and contributes financial and technical resources, through a set of actions undertaken in cooperation with the Agency that were codified in an agreement signed in April 2005.

Concerning the safety of radioactive sources, following the impetus given in 2003 by the Vienna conference and the adoption in Evian, under French presidency, of a G8 action plan, international action has strongly developed in particular through the IAEA programmes for reinforcing sources control and encouraging the application of the code of conduct.

France, having a long-standing experience in the field of radioactive source control and monitoring, intends to pursue its action in this field and is working actively to prepare the international conference organised by the Agency under the auspices of the G8, and which it will be hosting next month in Bordeaux.

France wishes also to address the issue of maritime transport. The conference organised in Vienna in 2003 served to highlight the high level of safety and the maturity of these activities. France is contributing actively to the Agency's action plan and as far as international transport is concerned, has initiated together with its partners in a dialogue that seeks to ensure the greatest level of transparency and to give to those countries that express the need the desired assurances as well as certain pieces of information that can be useful for them. France is pleased in this regard with the adoption by the 2004 General Conference of the IAEA of a consensual and balanced resolution on this issue prepared jointly by the shipping States and the coastal States.

France is willing to pursue cooperation and dialogue in order to continue to ensure the highest possible level of safety and to improve it even more. Our action in this area must respect the basic security requirements and should not in any way challenge the provisions of the law of the sea.

The last imperative is that of transparency. The development of nuclear energy cannot be envisaged without a political will and the support of a country's citizens. For Governments and populations to be aware of the challenges and the means made available, the greatest transparency is required. As far as France is concerned, it is determined to pursue the efforts for transparency already undertaken, in particular in safety related issues. When it comes to nuclear materials, France is a member of the group of countries that have signed the guidelines adopted for the management of civilian plutonium and as such it publishes a yearly status report on its civilian inventory. It is equally convinced that the management of highly enriched uranium stocks would benefit from similar guidelines.

France invites all those States that possess such material to adhere to this step that seeks to reinforce transparency and accountability.

To conclude, France would like to reaffirm the importance it gives to nuclear energy in the service of progress and in the framework of development that is sustainable and respectful both of human beings and of the Earth.

The implementation of strong and robust international cooperation will enable a growing number of countries to benefit from the peaceful applications of the atom.

The development of peaceful uses for nuclear energy constitutes one of the essential challenges of the 21st century, by allowing the community of Nations to provide the responses to the formidable economic, human and environmental challenges we face.

This development can only be ensured through the trust that is built on the piloting in good faith of nuclear programmes with peaceful purposes, out of respect for non-proliferation commitments made, as well as on increased transparency. The promotion of peaceful uses for nuclear energy and international cooperation in this domain, which constitutes one of the three pillars of the NPT, is a part of our mission based on article IV. The international community must come together so that with this Conference a new impetus is given to international cooperation for peaceful uses.