

Statement by External Affairs Minister of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee on the Civil Nuclear Initiative

A Plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to consider an exception for India from its guidelines to allow for full civil nuclear cooperation with India is being held in Vienna from September 4 – 5, 2008.

India has a long-standing and steadfast commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and total elimination of nuclear weapons. The vision of a world free of nuclear weapons which Shri Rajiv Gandhi put before the UN in 1988 still has universal resonance.

We approach our dialogue with the Nuclear Suppliers Group and all its members in a spirit of cooperation that allows for an ongoing frank exchange of views on subjects of mutual interest and concern. Such a dialogue will strengthen our relationship in the years to come.

Our civil nuclear initiative will strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. India believes that the opening of full civil nuclear cooperation will be good for India and for the world. It will have a profound positive impact on global energy security and international efforts to combat climate change.

India has recently submitted a Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament to the UN General Assembly, containing initiatives on nuclear disarmament. These include the reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear weapon States to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons; negotiation of a Convention on the complete prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe.

We remain committed to a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing. We do not subscribe to any arms race, including a nuclear arms race. We have always tempered the exercise of our strategic autonomy with a sense of global responsibility. We affirm our policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

We are committed to work with others towards the conclusion of a multilateral Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament that is universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable.

India has an impeccable non-proliferation record. We have in place an effective and comprehensive system of national export controls, which has been constantly updated to meet the highest international standards. This is manifested in the enactment of the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems Act in 2005. India has taken the necessary steps to secure nuclear materials and technology through comprehensive export control legislation and through harmonization and committing to adhere to Missile Technology Control Regime and Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines.

India will not be the source of proliferation of sensitive technologies, including enrichment and reprocessing transfers. We stand for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. We support international efforts to limit the spread of ENR

equipment or technologies to states that do not have them. We will work together with the international community to advance our common objective of non-proliferation. In this regard, India is interested in participating as a supplier nation, particularly for Thorium-based fuel and in establishment of international fuel banks, which also benefit India.

India places great value on the role played by the IAEA's nuclear safeguards system. We look forward to working with the IAEA in implementing the India-specific Safeguards Agreement concluded with the IAEA. In keeping with our commitment to sign and adhere to an Additional Protocol with respect to India's civil nuclear facilities, we are working closely with the IAEA to ensure early conclusion of an Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement.

New Delhi
5th September 2008