

Speech: Sir Alan Duncan addresses the 62nd IAEA General Conference

Madame President,

On behalf of the UK, I congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd General Conference. May I say at the outset that we fully align ourselves with the statement, which has just been made on behalf of the European Union.

This year, of all years, my Government wanted to send a strong signal of support for the Agency. That is why, as the responsible Minister at the Foreign Office, I have the honour to represent the United Kingdom today.

We live in an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world. We have seen the destabilising consequences when States pursue nuclear weapons. And we have worked together to prevent terrorists acquiring nuclear material.

This Agency plays a vital role in addressing such threats. It also helps States reap the enormous benefits of civil nuclear technologies.

One of the most important moments of diplomatic success was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It stands to achieve lasting advances for international security. The crucial work of monitoring and verifying the deal is a clear example of the Agency's role. The United Kingdom remains committed to the Iran deal. We welcome and applaud the Director-General's report confirming Iran's compliance with its nuclear commitments.

It is important that all remaining parties continue to implement the agreement in full, and that Iran continues to cooperate fully with the Agency.

With regard to North Korea, the United Kingdom welcomes progress made at the Singapore Summit, but we are clear that existing sanctions should remain until North Korea takes concrete steps towards the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and the removal of its ballistic missile capability.

Meanwhile Syria has failed to meet its safeguards obligations since 2011. We call on both Syria and North Korea to resume full compliance and cooperation with the Agency.

The UK supports the Agency's efforts to strengthen and develop its safeguards work including with the help of UK expertise and resource. Especially in monitoring and auditing a country's stocks and use of nuclear materials. This underpins the objectives of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

We call on all States to ratify an Additional Protocol, which is the gold standard of safeguards.

Madame President,

The United Kingdom is grateful to the Agency team and the Board of Governors for their support in our preparations for leaving the EU and Euratom. In June, the UK signed an agreement, the Voluntary Offer Agreement and an Additional Protocol with the Agency, which will maintain a cooperative framework within which we will meet our obligations as a responsible nuclear state when we are no longer a member of the EU.

We would like to build on the IAEA's valuable work to support the civil nuclear sector. This is the aim of the UK's Nuclear Sector Deal launched this summer, to make the construction and decommissioning of nuclear power stations more straightforward and less expensive.

The construction of Hinkley Point C will be the first of our next generation of nuclear power plants. Construction is underway and we continue to engage with sponsors of other new projects.

Madame President,

Safety, security and non-proliferation go hand in hand with the peaceful use of nuclear technology. We cannot responsibly promote access to nuclear technologies without ensuring that they are safe, secure, and used for the right purpose.

Because this matters so much we are proud to remain one of the biggest contributors of financial and technical support, to the Agency across all of its programmes.

This week, it is my pleasure to pledge the UK's contribution of €3.7 million to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2019. We will continue to pay on time and in full. We call on all Member States to do the same.

The UK has already contributed £4.1 million this year to the Nuclear Security Fund. I urge you all to support the Agency's work to help Member States implement robust nuclear security regimes. We will also continue our financial and technical support to nuclear safety and safeguards activities.

If something goes wrong, we have a duty to protect the public, and our neighbours. Effective emergency response must remain a global priority. We urge all Member States to use the information sharing channels between countries and the Agency on a regular basis, as well as in the event of an incident.

To conclude, Madame President,

The United Kingdom is a committed supporter of the IAEA. We want it to continue to meet its growing challenges, and the growing demands on its resources. We also want it to properly reflect the world it serves. For that to happen, we urge the Secretariat to ensure that the Agency is managed effectively and efficiently within existing resources and as always, we stand ready to help with this.

I thank the Director General for his leadership, and the Agency for its impartial work, which undoubtedly makes the world above all more safe and more secure.