

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group it gives me great pleasure to welcome you at our lunchtime seminar on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation.

Ten years ago, when Dr. Hans Blix, director general emeritus of the IAEA opened the second seminar on this issue, he pointed out:

“It is evident that the issue of nuclear export controls is discussed in a different atmosphere today from that existing in 1975 when the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) was founded. At that time there was widespread eagerness to import nuclear related equipment and technology. It was the future. There was also, among the relatively few nuclear suppliers, eagerness to export.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After a decade we can state that the course of events has changed again and a nuclear renaissance seems to be on the horizon. In today’s world where climate change has to be tackled together with the increase in the demand for energy, the importance of nuclear energy has gained a new momentum. While this nuclear renaissance will undoubtedly bring along new proliferation challenges we are confident that the international community has a well-established toolkit at its disposal to tackle them.

Export controls have a distinct and very specific role to play in this complex endeavor.

In our view, the NSG, which comprises 46 countries of various sizes and levels of development, has a special responsibility in nuclear non-proliferation. The aim of the NSG undertakings is to ensure that nuclear trade for peaceful purposes does not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The NSG Guidelines reflect the non-proliferation and peaceful nuclear cooperation objectives that NSG participants share with all NPT parties and parties to other international legally binding non-proliferation commitments, and are consistent with and complement these non-proliferation instruments. Strengthened international solidarity and enhanced transparency in the field of transfers of nuclear material is therefore our common asset.

The commitment of Participating Governments to improve transparency in nuclear related export controls and to cooperate more closely with non-NSG participants is reflected in the “Public Statement” adopted by consensus at the Budapest Plenary.

Implementing one of the decisions of the Budapest Plenary, the NSG has updated document INFCIRC/539 entitled “The Nuclear Suppliers Group: its Origins, Role and Activities”, which I ‘m proud to present to you today.

The purpose of this document is to contribute to a broader understanding of the NSG and its activities as part of an overall effort to promote dialogue and cooperation between NSG participants and non-NSG participants. In only a few months, the NPT Review Conference is going to take place, so it is opportune to recall paragraph 17 of Decision 2 on “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” agreed at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference which states: “transparency in nuclear related export controls should be promoted within the framework of dialogue and cooperation among all interested States party to the Treaty.” We are confident that enhanced transparency and active cooperation with non-NSG participants contribute not only to a better understanding of the activities of the Group but also encourages wider adherence to the NSG Guidelines.

An overview of the origins and development of the NSG indicates that the evolution of the system is closely intertwined with the development of the non-proliferation regime. We are well aware that the NSG does not exist in a vacuum. Recent developments and more particularly the adoption by consensus of UNSC 1887 can give further impetus to the ongoing work in the Group seeking adequate responses to non-proliferation challenges while ensuring that international trade and cooperation in the nuclear field is not hindered unjustly in the process. We are grateful for your most valuable contribution to these efforts.

Thank you!