

UK Statement to the IAEA Board of Governors on Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety

Chair,

The UK thanks the Director General for the Nuclear and Radiation Safety report as contained in GOV/2020/2.

I would like to draw out some of the report's key policy areas from a UK perspective. First, the UK is committed to transparency and places great value in the self-assessment and international peer review process, which enables the UK to enhance its radiological safety framework. The 60 peer reviews and advisory missions that were carried out globally, including an Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission to the UK in October 2019, are a crucial part of our shared commitment to both transparency and continuous improvement. We look forward to supporting the further development of these missions, including around ageing management, and commend their holistic focus on leadership, management and safety culture.

Secondly, The UK fully supports the Agency's continuing focus on the revision of Safety Guides to reflect lessons learned. We continue to support the development of commensurate and outcome-focused Emergency Preparedness and Response arrangements for consistent use across Member States.

Finally, the interface between safety and security offers significant opportunities to support objectives in both areas. Security should be taken into account in the development of safety guidance. Although distinctive, they are interdependent and complementary aspects of safe, responsible peaceful uses of nuclear. As was agreed by Member States in the Ministerial Declaration at the International Conference on Nuclear Security, we encourage the IAEA to continue to facilitate a coordination process to address the interface between nuclear security and nuclear safety.

The UK is a strong supporter of the Unified System for Information Exchange (USIE). It provides an essential platform for transparent communication during incidents and emergencies. USIE also provides a mechanism for sharing, on a voluntary basis, information on security-related incidents and emergencies. This is important, as nuclear and radiological incidents can realistically straddle both areas.

Chair,

I will take this opportunity to update you briefly on two of the UK's key

nuclear safety achievements over the past six months:

First, increasing diversity is a key priority, in order to drive innovation through a diversity of thought across all areas, including safety. We have continued to deliver this through the UK's Nuclear Sector Deal, supporting industry to achieve its commitment to 40% women in nuclear by 2030. On 5 December 2019, the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group, together with Women in Nuclear UK, jointly launched a Nuclear Sector Gender Roadmap. The roadmap sets out a plan of action across five themes – Attraction, Retention, Indicators, Industry Guidance and Enablers. We welcome the Agency's commitment to gender parity in the professional grades by 2025, and initiative like what we celebrated at lunchtime will underpin progress towards this.

Member states need play their part also.

Second, the Agency's ongoing support for Member States on decommissioning and waste management is invaluable and we were delighted to host the Technical Meeting on Achieving the Site End State at Dounreay in October 2019. Our National Decommissioning Authority has taken a number of important steps at Sellafield, including a retrievals programme to remove radioactive waste from high hazard facilities – a significant milestone on the journey to decommission these facilities.

Chair,

In partnership with the international community, we will continue to drive forward our vision for the UK's nuclear future. With innovation and collaboration at the core of how we work with industry and international partners, we look forward to working together to ensure that nuclear remains a safe, secure and cost-effective part of the energy mix as we transform our energy system to deliver net-zero.

With these comments, the UK takes note of the Director General's report on Nuclear and Radiation Safety as contained in GOV/2020/2.