German Statement on Cluster III

NPT Preparatory Committee

Agenda Item “Cluster 3 issues", 2 May 2018

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to align myself with the Statement by the EU and the positions of the NPDI regarding pillar three of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

the third pillar is one of the reasons why a functioning and fully effective Non-Proliferation Treaty is benefitting all of us, even those amongst us who do not opt for the use of nuclear energy.

Art. IV of the NPT clearly states that all States Parties to the NPT have the inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with their international obligations under Articles I, II and III of the NPT.
Germany fully respects that right and reiterates its willingness to cooperate with States that meet their nuclear non-proliferation obligations and that wish to develop a transparent civil nuclear programme that meets the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation.

Mr. Chairman,

although there are many benefits of peaceful uses, it has also become clear that the use of nuclear energy involves considerable risks as well. These risks concern all of us. The grave consequences of nuclear accidents as they happened in Chernobyl and Fukushima have global dimensions. The Chernobyl accident occurred on 26th April 1986 – almost exactly 32 years ago. Apart from the immediate disastrous consequences for the whole region, the international community is still today dealing with the legacy of that accident – just to mention the enormous task to construct the New Safe Confinement and the Interim Storage Facility and their enormous costs, essentially financed through the Chernobyl Shelter Fund. The Fukushima accident in March 2011 illustrated another risk dimension and made it clear that even risk scenarios may be challenged by the unforeseen. Keeping these enormous and incalculable risks in mind, Germany will phase out the production of nuclear power by 2022. In the framework of the Berlin Energy Transition
Dialogue, which took place a couple of weeks ago for the fourth time, Germany advocates for a global change in energy policy under the slogan “towards a global Energiewende” – this German expression being used on purpose!

Our message in the NPT framework is: Those who do not opt for the use of nuclear energy must be assured that those who do maintain the highest nuclear safety standards. Hence, they carry an existential responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

maintaining satisfactory levels of nuclear security is a global challenge, because the threat of nuclear terrorism has reached global dimensions. No one should assume that the threat only concerns those who actually use nuclear energy. Terrorism does not respect borders. So-called failed states add to the risks of nuclear materials falling out of regulatory control, with non-state-actors ready to revert to nuclear smuggling and nuclear terrorism.

A robust global nuclear security architecture enables all countries to reap the peaceful benefits of the atom. It plays an instrumental role in reducing the risks of an incident of nuclear terrorism which would have negative repercussions on peaceful nuclear cooperation everywhere.
Nuclear security is thus an essential element to peaceful use and should not be viewed as an impediment to the spread of such use, but rather as a catalyst. All of those engaged in peaceful nuclear activities want assurance that they are not facing undue risks from nuclear accidents or malicious efforts. Implementing international standards for nuclear safety and security helps provide the assurance that the risk is managed, thereby facilitating international cooperation in peaceful nuclear activities.

Public support of nuclear technology is critical to the continued development and fullest possible exchange of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and for access to applications of radiological material, inter alia for cancer treatment.

Mr. Chairman,

Germany commends the IAEA for its crucial and invaluable work regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through its safeguards-system.

The German safeguards support program for the IAEA covers not only the development of equipment and procedures, but also the development of safeguards approaches, training of Agency inspectors, development of safeguards evaluation
methods and the appointment of cost-free experts to the IAEA.

Germany as well supports the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Program and Peaceful Uses Initiative as effective means to promote the benefits of nuclear technology in areas such as human health, agriculture, water management and industrial applications as well as energy to meet the development needs of IAEA Member States.

Germany highly values the laboratories in Seibersdorf as a leading research and capacity building institution. Germany contributed to the enhancement and modernization of the laboratories with substantial extrabudgetary funds to the ReNual and ReNual + programmes.

Germany is currently the fourth largest contributor to the IAEA’s budget and has been operating its IAEA safeguards support program for 40 years. Germany is also a major voluntary contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund. In addition to Germany’s share in the contribution of the European Union, we supported the NSF bilaterally with about 7,5 Mio. €.

Through the Nuclear Security Fund, Germany supported the work of the Agency itself as well as in partner countries with a special focus on capacity building for the security of radioactive sources and the protection from cyber attacks against nuclear facilities. Much work needs still to be done. The IAEA’s nuclear security funding needs to be put on a firm,
reliable footing and its mandate adapted to address evolving nuclear security threats. We support the IAEA’s central role in the global nuclear security architecture and we do hope that the momentum can be maintained also in the NPT context.

The positive effects of an active and sustainable implementation of the Third Pillar are major assets of the NPT, which should be highly appreciated as a catalyst or motivator for positive developments in other areas.

Thank you very much for your attention.