

2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Plutonium and highly enriched uranium management

Working paper submitted to Main Committee II by Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden

1. The Conference recognizes the particular requirement for safeguards on unirradiated direct-use nuclear material, and notes the projections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that the use of separated plutonium for peaceful purposes is expected to increase over the next several years. The Conference also notes that many research reactors are discontinuing the use of highly enriched uranium fuel in favour of low-enriched uranium fuel as a result of the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors (RERTR) Programme. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the considerable work undertaken to ensure the continuing effectiveness of IAEA safeguards in relation to reprocessing, to the storage of separated plutonium and to uranium enrichment.
2. The Conference welcomes the additional transparency on matters pertaining to the management of plutonium and highly enriched uranium resulting from the establishment, in 1997, of Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium (INFCIRC/549), laying down policies that several States, including the nuclear-weapon States, have decided to adopt. In this context, the Conference encourages all other States that separate, hold, process or use separated plutonium in their civil nuclear activities to adopt similar policies. Furthermore, the Conference encourages efforts aiming at the establishment of similar guidelines for the management of highly enriched uranium.
3. The Conference reaffirms that all plutonium and highly enriched uranium for civil purposes should be under IAEA safeguards. The Conference encourages States to examine long-term arrangements for the management of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, in order to avoid the stockpiling of material that could potentially be diverted to direct use for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

4. The Conference furthermore expresses satisfaction at the recent decision by the IAEA Board of Governors enabling the Agency to carry out, on a voluntary basis, certain monitoring tasks regarding the production and transfer of separated neptunium.
