

Extended Greenpeace statement on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr Mohamed ElBaradei and the International Atomic Energy Agency

Amsterdam 7, October 2005 - Greenpeace today said the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a mistake, describing the IAEA as one of the world's worst nuclear proliferators.

"Due to the IAEA's role in promoting nuclear power, including plutonium reprocessing and uranium enrichment, there are many reasons why it should not have received the Nobel Peace Prize. The IAEA has spent nearly fifty years proliferating the very technology and nuclear materials that have given many countries the ability to develop nuclear weapons, including Iraq, North Korea and Iran," said Gerd Leipold, executive director of Greenpeace International. It has been a key 'proliferator' in the cases of Iraq, North Korea and Iran, for example.

The discovery of Iraq's nuclear program in 1991 confirmed that the IAEA had played an important role in providing training to Iraqi nuclear scientists, and that technology and materials used in the program had been supplied by countries working with the IAEA to promote the use of peaceful nuclear technology, enrichment and reprocessing technology, research reactors and highly enriched uranium. It highlighted the contradiction inherent within the IAEA that promotes the very technology that is used for nuclear weapons development.

The effectiveness of IAEA safeguards has not significantly improved since 1991. The Agency is still incapable of detecting the diversion of plutonium and highly enriched uranium from reprocessing and enrichment plants, yet it is promoting the expansion of these technologies and the wider use of nuclear power.

For years the IAEA turned a blind eye to North Korea's nuclear program because under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) North Korea was entitled to nuclear power. While the IAEA has attempted to safeguard plutonium at Yongbyon, it knows that technically it is incapable of doing so effectively. That is why the reprocessing operations at Yongbyon are feared and opposed by the international community. At the same time, the IAEA is actively supporting the training of South Korean scientists in the very technologies that North Korea is pursuing for plutonium reprocessing. This is under the IAEA's Innovative Nuclear Power Research Program (INPRO). The IAEA is also supporting the start up of a new large reprocessing plant in Japan at Rokkasho-mura which will produce up to 8 tons of plutonium each year.

Under the IAEA stockpiles of weapons usable plutonium in so called peaceful programs have increased above that contained in all nuclear weapons programs.

The IAEA is in a dilemma over Iran which as an NPT member is entitled to nuclear power, including uranium enrichment. The IAEA is actively

promoting the expansion of nuclear power and thus incapable of condemning Iran at this stage. The fact that the international community, led by the US and EU3 does not want Iran operating an enrichment plant underscores that they have no confidence in IAEA safeguards that would applied to such a facility. Greenpeace agrees with this analysis: safeguards do not and cannot work to the level necessary.

The solution is not to condemn Iran alone, but rather to initiate a global prohibition on uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing, and to phase out nuclear power, all of which the IAEA is actively against.

Greenpeace calls on the IAEA Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, to use his position and the prestige afforded by being a Nobel Laureate to push for fundamental reforms within the IAEA. He must once and for all remove the dangerous contradiction at the heart international nuclear proliferation regime and end the Agency's role in promoting nuclear technology, only then can he be said to be a true force for peace and security in the world.

ElBaradei recognises that 35-40 countries with nuclear power are capable of developing a nuclear weapon within a few months. Indeed, one single reactor produces enough plutonium every year to make 30 nuclear bombs. Rather than promote more nuclear power it is time to push clean green and peaceful renewable energy technologies.