

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan  
38<sup>th</sup> Floor, United Nations  
United Nations Plaza, NY 10017  
USA

23 May 2006

Dear Secretary-General Annan,

We write to you concerning your speech of 18 May 2006 at Tokyo University on the NPT crisis of confidence and compliance.<sup>1</sup>

We welcome your every effort to promote the political and security utility of verified, safeguarded global disarmament. Your attention to disarmament and non-proliferation is admirable, and your insistence that the temperature be turned down on Iran is welcome, as is your recognition of the immediate danger posed by thousands of nuclear weapons on hair trigger alert.

However we cannot let pass your suggestion that “the proliferation of nuclear weapons is restricted and reversed, through trust, dialogue and negotiated agreement, **with international guarantees ensuring the supply of nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes, thereby advancing development and economic well-being.**” Nuclear power does not advance development or economic well-being, and, despite the suggested multilateral nuclear approach, will indeed lead to nuclear proliferation.

We believe it is repugnant for the United Nations to promote an industry that is environmentally destructive, mutagenic, cancerous and the most expensive and dangerous way to boil water, as well as an indefensible solution to climate change on economic, carbon emission or environmental grounds. Recent discussions at the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in May have shown that nuclear energy is not reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable or environmentally sound, as is required by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). We explain these matters below.

**International Guarantee of Fuel is a Proliferation Risk:** The fuel guarantee proposal to which you refer is one of many ideas being advanced as a Multilateral Nuclear Approach, which Greenpeace rejects in the enclosed report<sup>2</sup> for several reasons. Fuel guarantees are supposed to decrease nuclear dangers through limiting the amount of reprocessing sites. However, fewer, bigger reprocessing sites would require a great deal of transportation of nuclear materials. Fuel and waste will travel from nuclear power stations to repositories, to reprocessing centers, and then again as nuclear fuel. Low and high-level waste and poisons resulting from the reprocessing will have to be transported through high-density population areas and sensitive environments. Besides the very real health and environmental dangers posed, obviously transports are also a proliferation risk from terrorism or theft by criminal networks or even states. It also is directly contrary to the declaration in the World Summit Outcome that the cessation of the transport of radioactive materials through the regions of Small Island Developing States is an ultimate desired goal of Small Island Developing States.

Your suggestion that nuclear energy is positive for development is simply unsupported in the academic research literature, or by the World Bank and virtually all international development agencies, and nor is it the consensus or even prevailing opinion among governments at inter-governmental meetings, from which you derive your mandate. The recent Commission on Sustainable Development, which met for two weeks in New York to discuss energy matters, did not endorse nuclear energy.

Governments gathered at the recent Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), 1-12 May 2006 boasted about their slice of the booming market in renewables, and the need for more incentives and technology transfer from the north to the south. Paragraph 149 in the CSD final document states that “[n]uclear energy technologies were identified by some as a possible supply option in interested countries, and for them the challenge lies in

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10466.doc.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/IAEMultilateralNuclearApproachReport.pdf>

ensuring environmentally sound, socially acceptable and cost effective solutions and in addressing nuclear safety and spent fuel and waste management as well as public concerns on these issues". This is a very qualified and negative sentence. The only other two references are in paragraph 203, which acknowledges that, "there were different opinions on the role of nuclear energy in providing energy for sustainable development" and paragraph 233, which registers the results of dialogue with major groups, finding that "The proliferation of nuclear energy technologies is considered by a number of major groups to be unsustainable."

You should also be aware that despite Japan's efforts to call for effective nuclear disarmament on the one hand, it has actively pursued the development of proliferation prone technology and nuclear weapons materials. Specifically, Japan has acquired a plutonium stockpile in excess of 43 tonnes - both held in Japan and in Europe. In addition, it has recently begun spent fuel testing at the Rokkasho-mura reprocessing plant with plans to reprocess thousands of tons of spent fuel over the coming decades. There is no current use of plutonium in Japanese nuclear power plants, and its plutonium stockpiling program is encouraging the further proliferation of nuclear weapons materials in Asia and beyond. The fact that as a result of nuclear transports between Europe and Japan, developing nations in the Caribbean and Latin America, the Pacific and Africa have condemned the threats to their environment, public health and economies underscores the threat by existing nuclear programs. Most recently, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) issued a strong condemnation of the danger of nuclear transports and that they should be stopped. This threat would be exacerbated by the establishment of international nuclear fuel transfers and leasing.

Greenpeace long concerned with the proliferation of all fissile materials believes that one solution to the current crisis would be for the early negotiation of a Comprehensive Fissile Material Treaty, that prohibited all production of weapons usable plutonium and highly enriched uranium whether for dedicated military use or so-called commercial purposes. Existing stocks in both military and civil stockpiles would also be placed under international control through a comprehensive treaty.<sup>3</sup>

**The UN should cease promotion of the nuclear industry:** The United Nations should not be promoting nuclear technology and the nuclear industry for several reasons. Nuclear energy simply does not meet the criteria established by governments at the UN for sustainable energy sources, which should be "reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound." The enclosed Greenpeace report describes why nuclear does not meet any of these criteria.<sup>4</sup>

Because it is not sustainable according to UN established criteria, any institution associated with the UN – and the IAEA is one – should not be in the business of creating opportunities for the nuclear cartel to make profit. While many links of the nuclear chain are state-owned, a great deal of the activities are commercially run or outsourced. The UN should not be facilitating unprofitable and dangerous businesses at all, but especially not those that create an unjustifiable and unsustainable toxicity liability for hundreds of thousands of years to come.

Greenpeace urges you to work to shift resources and emphasis away from this industry that is economically unjustifiable, environmentally destructive, mutagenic and cancerous, to renewable and sustainable energy which does promote sustainable development. Ten former Environment Ministers agree, from the Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France and the UK, who have signed the enclosed call to you and Director General ElBaradei to propose reforms to the IAEA mandate as part of the overall UN reform process to the Atomic Agency's mandate, withdrawing the promotion of nuclear technology for good reasons.

The financial record reveals a subsidy-dependent source of energy that diverts scarce resources from investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency. It doesn't add up; this is a matter of public record. Nuclear energy relies on subsidies, including underwriting for construction cost or caps on construction costs, operating performance, non-fuel operations and maintenance cost, nuclear fuel cost and decommissioning cost, liability caps and guarantees that the output will be purchased at a guaranteed price. Usually absent from consideration are decommissioning costs, the long-term costs of dealing with waste and external costs such as environmental damage, effects on human health and social costs. This makes nuclear power plants a particularly risky for developing countries, due to exposure to cost overruns, downtime, the cost of dealing with waste and dependence on foreign technology.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/comprehensive-fissile-material.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/nuclear-power-unsustainable.pdf>



greenpeace international

Otto Heldringstraat 5, 1066 AZ, Amsterdam, Netherlands

t +31 20 718 2000 f +31 20 514 8151

k.v.k. reg. 41200415 stichting greenpeace council

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

Nuclear energy is also not an answer to climate change; it is not emissions free. When mining, processing, and transportation of uranium to make nuclear fuel are considered, the release of carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) is comparable to burning natural gas for electric power. Additional energy required for decommissioning and disposition of nuclear wastes generated significantly increases CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from the nuclear cycle. The transition away from the combustion of fossil fuels cannot be accomplished by the expansion of nuclear power since nuclear reactors is actually dependent on the availability of a centralized and electric power grid, typically powered by coal in order to run reactor safety systems in case of an emergency.

Nuclear power only delivers electricity, providing about 15% of global electricity generation which contributes about 20% to anthropogenic greenhouse gases, and nuclear power's share of the overall electricity market is set to decrease in the coming decades even with a very massive new build program, i.e., in the order of 600-1200 new reactors in the next 25 years. It is economically, practically and politically inconceivable that new nuclear power plants could be brought on line quickly enough to make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change in the next decade or two, the critical period during which we must take the steps which will set us on the road to avoiding dangerous climate change. And the massive resources invested in doing so would divert resources from renewable energy, which is far more promising and effective in producing energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Greenpeace also takes issue with the implication in your speech regarding the development of more potent weapons and "current thinking about using such weapons in conflict" which you characterize as the "old challenges." These are the very real immediate challenges of today. The five permanent members of the Security Council are upgrading or contemplating enhancing their arsenals, which sets a standard, and provides strong incentives for proliferation. Through so doing the Nuclear Weapon States provide a terrible example to would-be proliferators by investing human and economic resources into armament and not disarmament in direct violation of their NPT promises and obligations, and the findings of the International Court of Justice, which requires governments to not only deliberate but produce concrete results, to bring negotiations to a conclusion.

Greenpeace urges you to reconsider the proliferation risks posed by fuel guarantee arrangements. We strongly urge you promote the reduction of nuclear dangers, rather than multiplying them, by proposing changes to the IAEA mandate, to get the UN out of the uneconomic, dirty expensive and dangerous nuclear business.

We would like to end on a positive note. There is a real answer to the challenge of climate change and energy, and it lies in renewables like wind, solar, tidal and similar renewable energy as well as in greater energy efficiency, which is the most efficient answer of all. All of these ideas and efforts have been facilitated by UN processes and are real steps towards sustainable development and towards countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely

Felicity Hill  
Political Adviser, Nuclear and Disarmament Issues

CC. IAEA Director-General ElBaradei