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Title: The Minister of External Affairs laid a statement regarding Issue of Nuclear Enrichment and Reprocessing (ENR) Technology .

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): I beg to lay the following statement:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, several Members have raised the issue of the adoption of new guidelines by the Nuclear Suppliers Group at its Plenary meeting in the Netherlands from June 23-24, 2011 relating to transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies.

2. Concerns have been expressed about its implications on our existing agreements with other countries on civil nuclear cooperation, whether the revised guidelines are targeted at India and where do they leave us with regard to the scope of our civil nuclear cooperation with the rest of the world.

3. In this context, I wish to make the following clarifications :-

i) We are absolutely clear that as far as India is concerned, the basis of our international civil nuclear cooperation remains as contained in the special exemption from the NSG guidelines given to India on September 6, 2008. The "Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India" issued on September 6, 2008 after an Extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the NSG spells out the scope of our cooperation. That statement contains reciprocal commitments and actions by both sides relating to international civil nuclear cooperation.

ii) The September 2008 exemption accords a special status to India. It was granted knowing full well that India is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Honourable Members would recall that on August 17, 2006, PM had indicated that one of our main objectives of the Civil Nuclear Initiative was the removal of restrictions on all aspects of cooperation and technology transfers pertaining to civil nuclear energy, covering all aspects of the complete nuclear fuel cycle. We see this as the surest guarantee of India's acceptance as a full and equal partner of the international nuclear community. As PM had informed this august House on July 29, 2009, we were successful in securing a "clean" exemption from the NSG in September 2008 i.e. the NSG members had agreed to transfer all technologies which are consistent with their national law.

iii) As far as we are concerned, the September 2008 decision is the basis and overarching framework that governs cooperation in civil nuclear matters between India and the NSG. The issue is the full implementation of that understanding. This is what we expect and our major partners are committed to.

iv) We must take note of the fact that the NSG Public Statement of June 24, 2011 makes a specific reference to cooperation with India. It says that the NSG "continued to consider all aspects of the implementation of the 2008 Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India and discussed the NSG relationship with India".

v) The agreements reached for permitting international civil nuclear cooperation with India contain commitments on both sides. We expect all NSG members to honour their commitments as reflected in the 2008 NSG Statement and our bilateral cooperation agreements.

vi) The Guidelines of June 23-24, 2011 are a decision by the NSG. India is not a member of the NSG as yet and therefore not a party to this decision.

4. Following the NSG Plenary of June 2011, several of our partners have clarified their positions:

i) The US Department of State in a Press Statement has stated that the "Obama Administration fully supports the 'clean' Nuclear Suppliers Group exception for India and speedy implementation of the US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. Nothing about the new Enrichment and Reprocessing (ENR) transfer restrictions agreed to by the NSG members should be construed as detracting from the unique impact and importance of the US-India Agreement or our commitment to full civil nuclear cooperation". The Press Statement further states that the "NSG's NPT references, including those in the ENR guidelines, in no way detract from the exception granted to India by NSG members in 2008".

ii) A Communique issued by the Ambassador of France in New Delhi on July 5, 2011 has stated that the NSG exemption "reflects the unique situation of India and constitutes a historical achievement. Therefore, in the French view, nothing in the existing and future guidelines shall be interpreted as detracting from that exemption or reducing the ambition of our bilateral cooperation".

iii) The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman on July 14, 2011 stated that the NSG decision "does not affect in any way the September 2008 decision of the Group to unfreeze peaceful nuclear cooperation with India".

5. In so far as enrichment and reprocessing technology is concerned, I would like to reiterate to Honourable Members

that India has full mastery of the entire nuclear fuel cycle, and this includes enrichment and reprocessing technology. We have a well-developed indigenous enrichment and reprocessing infrastructure. Government is committed to taking forward our domestic three-stage nuclear power programme. India is among the handful of countries that has developed fast breeder technology. Access to enrichment and reprocessing technology from abroad, as part of international civil nuclear cooperation, is only an additionality to accelerate our three-stage programme.

6. The transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology has no bearing whatsoever on India's upfront entitlement to reprocess foreign origin spent fuel and the use of such fuel in our own safeguarded facilities.

7. Not every NSG member has the ability to undertake transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology to other countries. We expect that those that do and have committed to do so in bilateral agreements with India, will live up to their legal commitments.

8. I would also like reassure Honourable Members that we will not accept pre-conditions for transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology. There is no question of India joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon State.

9. India is engaged with the four multilateral export control regimes, namely the NSG, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement for full membership. We have noted with appreciation the expressions of support from a number of our partners towards this objective.

10. I am confident that the international nuclear order will continue to evolve in India's favour. We are poised to emerge as one of the major nuclear countries in the world, with a large and diversified nuclear industry. India is committed to full international civil nuclear cooperation for the development needs of our country and is engaged in discussions with foreign companies to expand our nuclear energy programme. We expect that our international partners will fully honour their commitments in this regard.

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