

PROGRAMME FOR PREVENTING AND COMBATTING ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN NUCLEAR MATERIAL

Illicit trafficking in nuclear material* continues to pose a global proliferation risk and a potential danger to public health and safety. We have recognized the importance of this issue at our meetings in Naples and Halifax. The criminal diversion of nuclear material could assist states or terrorist groups to bypass the carefully crafted controls of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and permit them to construct or otherwise acquire a nuclear or radiological weapon. The majority of cases, so far, have involved only small amounts of fissile material or material of little use for weapon's purposes, and many apprehended nuclear traffickers have been swindlers or petty thieves. Nevertheless, cases of illicit nuclear trafficking continue to occur. Accordingly, we have concluded that increased cooperation among our governments to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material will contribute to increased international security and public safety, and to achievement of global non-proliferation objectives.

International efforts to suppress illicit trafficking in nuclear material should address several fundamental aspects of the problem :

- * safe and secure storage of nuclear material and effective material protection, control, and accounting to prevent its diversion ;

- * cooperative intelligence, customs, and law enforcement efforts to prevent the transportation and sale of diverted material .

- * and joint efforts to identify and suppress illicit supply of, and demand for, nuclear material and to deter potential traffickers.

In addition, nuclear material released by the dismantling of nuclear weapons and no longer required for defence purposes must be safely, affordably, and effectively stored, protected and controlled, until it can be used for non-explosive purposes or safely and permanently disposed of. This material must also be placed under international safeguards as soon as it is practicable to do so.

The international community's response to these challenges should draw upon and further reinforce the existing instruments and organizations of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. These include universal adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the

* As defined by Article XX of the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency.