



Kingdom of Belgium
National declaration by
H.E. Mr Philippe Kridelka,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Security Council
"Non-Proliferation"/Iran/JCPoA/Res 2231

New York, 22 December 2020

Thank you, Mr President.

I will now speak in my national capacity.

Allow me first of all to thank Ms Rosemary DiCarlo and Mr Olof Skoog for their briefings.

One leitmotif that emerges from their statements, Mr President, is **the strong commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA)**, adopted by the international community in 2015. That commitment is also shared by the vast majority of the members of this Council, including my country, Belgium.

I see three main reasons for this, which were also mentioned by our briefers:

Firstly, since its entry into force, the Comprehensive Action Plan has made it possible to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature and transparency of Iran's nuclear programme. Very concretely, on the ground, IAEA inspectors ensure this constant monitoring, thanks to the most comprehensive system of inspections in the world and Iran's cooperation.

Secondly, the plan is a centrepiece of multilateralism. Negotiated by the five permanent members of this Council, together with Germany, Iran and the European Union, the JCPoA is more than a nuclear agreement. It is a confidence-building tool and the result of 12 years of intense diplomatic activities, based on dialogue and respect for the parties.

Lastly, it is one of the great successes of nuclear non-proliferation. It occupies a prominent place in the non-proliferation architecture, as patiently built and guaranteed by the international community since the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970.

These achievements should not, however, mask **the challenges facing the Plan today**, Mr President. I will name three of these.

Firstly, I can only join with my European partners and share their concerns about Iran's ballistic programme and arms transfers. Such behaviour remains incompatible with the provisions of Res 2231 (until 18 October 2020 with regard to arms transfers).

However, it would be misleading to believe that these challenges can be solved in isolation, without taking into account the regional security context. Belgium therefore encourages any regional approach to dialogue, cooperation and, ultimately, the construction of a regional security architecture. This idea is not new. It is now time to implement it in practice, and the debate organised by the Russian Presidency of the Council on 20 October contributed to our collective reflections.

Secondly, the Plan is suffering from the withdrawal of the United States in May 2018 and the various US actions taken to date. These not only undermine the key objectives of the Plan but also *de facto* prevent other UN members from implementing its provisions.

At the same time, we regret Iran's successive decommitments from its nuclear obligations, including the law recently passed by the Iranian Parliament (the *Majlis*), which could result in a significant expansion of Iran's enrichment programme and reduced IAEA access capacity. These measures are incompatible with the JCPoA and with the nuclear commitments of our Iranian partners.

Belgium therefore calls for the United States to return to the JCPoA. It calls on Iran to stop its "less for less" policy and resume all its nuclear commitments.

Thirdly, Mr President, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action must bring economic benefits to the Iranian people. This is one of its key objectives and must remain so. This objective becomes particularly important, especially during this pandemic.

Belgium welcomes the establishment of INSTEX (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) by its European partners, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. This instrument aims to facilitate trade with Iran, and my country joined in November 2019, along with Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Other countries may follow.

Mr President,

These challenges must not lead us to pessimism; on the contrary. **The diplomatic space remains open and the signals are green for its reinvestment.** In this regard, we commend the determined efforts of the remaining participating States: France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, China, and Iran, as well as the European Union, in the framework of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) and the Joint Commission. Only yesterday (21 December), in a joint statement, the Foreign Ministers of these countries expressed their determination to address the current challenges involved in the implementation of the JCPoA, in terms of nuclear non-proliferation and the lifting of sanctions.

Like the E3, in their joint declaration of 7 December, Belgium lastly welcomes the **encouraging announcements by President-elect Biden** in favour of American recommitment to the Plan.

In conclusion, Belgium encourages all the stakeholders to courageously return to the path of diplomacy, trust and multilateralism, with a view to finding collective solutions in everyone's interest.

Thank you.