

**Group of 78 Statement on Iran**  
Adopted by the Board of Directors  
March 26 2013

Principal Points:

- Avoid the use of military force; work with other states and through international organizations – particularly the United Nations – to ensure that acts of war and violence are precluded from all avenues to resolve the outstanding issues associated with Iran.
- Continue engagement; actively participate in diplomatic efforts to search for and explore constructive and sustainable solutions
- Employ smart not indiscriminate sanctions; work to relax the sanctions progressively as concrete progress is made and ensure that legal humanitarian trade (such as for drugs and medical equipment) is not impeded.
- Recognize and support Iran's right to peaceful use of nuclear energy within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and under the IAEA.
- Recognize and respond to Iran's legitimate security interests and concerns in the region as the basis for a reciprocal Iranian response.

The International community has identified serious security challenges and dangers arising from Iranian policies pertaining to its nuclear program, as well as certain regional approaches and Iran's domestic human rights record. At the same time, it is important to underscore that these challenges, while serious, are neither unique nor necessarily graver than those currently posed by other actors within the region and the international system more generally.

The nuclear and other Iranian policies giving rise to international concerns have complex origins and modus operandi and the solutions to them will require both targeted and general approaches within a UN multilateral and bilateral context and much patience. *At a minimum, the international community must ensure that its responses do not exacerbate these problems rather than ameliorating them.*

Balanced and forceful diplomacy must be the basis for seeking reasonable solutions that adequately address the potential nuclear proliferation threat without resort to the use of unilateral military force, which would have serious and highly unpredictable results, including a potentially catastrophic war in the region.

Sanctions are not diplomatic but coercive measures enacted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In response to findings by the IAEA that Iran was in non-compliance with its nuclear safeguards obligations, the UN Security Council has

mandated certain sanctions while others have been adopted by the US and other allies, particularly against the Iranian oil export industry. These sanctions risk serious harm to the Iranian economy without necessarily achieving any of the desired results. They therefore should be relaxed to the extent that some progress and certainty is achieved on the nuclear file. Further, as a matter of urgency, the USA and EU should clarify their sanctions regulations to ensure that humanitarian trade (such as for drugs and medical equipment) – which is completely outside the scope of the sanctions - is no longer impeded.

Canada's decision to suspend direct diplomatic relations with Iran was unfortunate and signalled a retreat from diplomacy. We urge Canada to make every effort to re-establish relations at the earliest possible opportunity. At the same time Canada should continue to work with the international community to achieve a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear file.

Outstanding issues with respect to Iran's nuclear program are best resolved in a comprehensive manner within the NPT framework as follows:

- verification by the IAEA of the continuing non-nuclear weapons status of Iran in such a manner as to allow for a peaceful civilian nuclear enrichment capacity;
- a firm commitment by Iran to continue within the NPT framework and to sign the IAEA Additional Protocol to allow for on-site inspections; and
- a re-energized international commitment to move ahead with a nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) free zone in the Middle East as negotiated at the 2010 NPT review conference and through international agreement at the IAEA.

Regarding the broader security environment, there should be a recognition of Iran's legitimate security interests and concerns in the region, in return for which Iran would more explicitly recognize the security concerns of other regional states. The aim would be for all states to refrain from threats and actions that would impinge on individual or collective security in the region and to commit to transparent consultations to resolve differences.