CONSULTATION ON UK PLUTONIUM STOCKPILE

The Government's preferred option is that the stockpile be re-used in nuclear reactors in plutonium-uranium fuel (known as mixed-oxide - MOX - fuel). Since the launch of the consultation there have occurred the tragic and serious events at the Fukushima nuclear reactors.

Ongoing problems in No 3 reactor at Fukushimna may be linked directly to the MOX fuel in the reactor. Given what we know about Fukushima - and what we have yet to learn - it is simply not sensible for the Government to continue with this consultation. The full extent of these risks are not fully understood in an accident situation.

Even under normal conditions there are a number of issues regarding the use MOX fuel in reactors. It gives rise to risks greater even than using 'conventional' uranium fuel. Burning MOX creates spent fuel which is even more radioactive and problematic to deal with than the high-burn up fuels which would result from new build reactors.

Estimates show that disposing of MOX fuel is much more costly than the very high costs of dealing with spent fuel from current reactors and proposed new build. I am asking the Government to call a halt to this consultation because

- It was launched before the accidents as Fukushima. No decision of any kind can be made until the full impacts of MOX in an accident situation is understood.
- It is not reasonable to carry on with a 'business as usual' approach to nuclear power - and related consultation - given what has happened in Japan.

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