

## **Pakistan applies for Nuclear Suppliers Group membership**

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**Islamabad:** Pakistan Friday said that it has formally applied for the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, after China blocked India's entry into the 48-member elite group.

The Foreign Office (FO) said that Pakistan's ambassador in Vienna on Thursday applied for the membership through a letter addressed to the NSG chairman.

In the letter, Pakistan said the decision to seek participation in the export-control regime reflects Pakistan's strong support for international efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Â Â Â *"Pakistan has the expertise, manpower, infrastructure, as well as the ability to supply NSG controlled items, goods and services for a full range of nuclear applications for peaceful uses," the Foreign Office said.*

It said Pakistan attaches high priority to nuclear safety and security. It has taken legal, regulatory and administrative measures to bring nuclear safety and security at par with international standards.

"Pakistan's export-control regime is underpinned by strong legislation, regulatory and enforcement mechanisms. The national export control lists are harmonized with the control lists of NSG, MTCR and Australia Group," it said.

The development comes as China harps on the need for consensus in the NSG, where it is reportedly pushing for Pakistan's entry despite US' strong backing for India to join the elite body that seeks reducing nuclear proliferation by controlling the export and re-transfer of materials.

Pakistan has stressed the need for NSG to adopt a non-discriminatory criteria-based approach for NSG membership of the countries, which have never been party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

India, Pakistan, Israel and South Sudan were the four UN member states which have not signed the NPT, the international pact aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

The Foreign Office said Pakistan's NSG membership will further NSG non-proliferation objectives by the inclusion of a state with nuclear supply capabilities and its adherence to NSG Guidelines and best practices on supply of controlled items, goods, materials, technologies and services.

Through an official note, Pakistan has informed the IAEA Director-General of its adherence to the objectives of NSG and its decision to act in accordance with NSG Guidelines with regard to transfer of nuclear material, equipment and related technology, including related dual-use equipment, materials, software and related technology.

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