

## **Pakistan rejects new formula for NSG membership, terms it 'discriminatory', 'unhelpful'**

30/12/2016 22:35 by admin

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Foreign Office has rejected a new formula for evaluation of the candidature of non-Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) states for the Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSG) membership as "discriminatory" and "unhelpful".

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At the weekly media briefing on Thursday, Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria said: "This would be clearly discriminatory and would contribute nothing in terms of furthering the non-proliferation objectives of the NSG," Dawn News reported.

Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina had been appointed as a facilitator for discussions among the NSG members after Seoul plenary meeting of the 48-nation nuclear trade cartel ended in a stalemate over membership applications from India and Pakistan.

The deadlock persisted at the extraordinary plenary held in Vienna last month.

Ambassador Grossi this month submitted a two-page revised document to the NSG member countries containing a nine-point proposal on considering the applications of India and Pakistan, both of whom are non-NPT countries.

The NSG members last week again met in Vienna for discussing the document called "revised version of a draft "Exchange of Notes' for Non-NPT applicants".

Pakistan, Zakaria said, continues to emphasise the imperative for a non-discriminatory criteria-based approach for the NSG membership of non-NPT states in a non-discriminatory manner, Dawn News said.

"Such a criteria-based approach will further the non-proliferation objective of the NSG as well as the objective of strategic stability in South Asia," he said.

The spokesman reminded the NSG members of "the heavy responsibility" they bore with respect to admission of non-NPT states.

"It is important for the credibility of the NSG and the future of the non-proliferation regime that the NSG be seen as a rule-based organisation rather than a grouping which is driven by commercial and political considerations that trump its non-proliferation objectives," he maintained.

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