

RELEASE IN FULL

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Draft reply to Jalili's letter of 14 February 2012

Brussels, March 2012

H.E. Dr Saeed Jalili
Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council
Islamic Republic of Iran

Thank you for your letter of 14 February 2012, in reply to my letter of 21 October 2011.

I welcome your suggestion to resume dialogue and your readiness to address the international community's concerns about your nuclear programme. The dialogue will have to focus on this key issue. It goes without saying that we remain ready to also address other areas of interest to you and to look into ideas you might put forward. However, at this stage, the main focus of our efforts will have to be on building confidence by developing concrete and practical steps.

We remain convinced that initially we could work towards the shared objective to engage in a constructive dialogue on the basis of reciprocity and a step-by-step approach based on practical and specific suggestions for confidence building measures. In this regard, we remain committed to the practical and specific suggestions which we have put forward. We also recall our readiness to consider any proposals you might wish to make on your side. These confidence building steps should form first elements of a phased approach which would eventually lead to a full settlement between us, involving the full implementation by Iran of UNSC and IAEA Board of Governors' resolutions.

Our overall goal remains a comprehensive negotiated, long-term solution which restores international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, while respecting Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy consistent with the NPT.

I am also convinced that, on the basis of Iran's readiness to engage seriously and without pre-conditions in meaningful discussions on concrete confidence building steps concerning your nuclear programme, we will be able to open positive perspectives for negotiations and to make progress in efforts to take fundamental steps for sustainable co-operation which will allow us to overcome the existing deficit of confidence in the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, and bring benefits for all sides.

Therefore, looking forward to a sustained process of dialogue aimed at producing concrete results and in order not to repeat the experience of Istanbul, I would propose that we resume our talks at a mutually convenient date and venue as soon as possible.

In practical terms, our deputies could get together in the near future in order to prepare for the first round of our resumed talks.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Ashton

Copy: H.E. Dr Ali-Akbar Salehi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
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