

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH IRISH PRIME MINISTER

THORP (CONTINGENCY BRIEF)

Points to Make

- Fully aware of Irish Government's opposition to THORP. Secretary of State for Environment and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food are carefully considering the responses to the further round of public consultation (which ended on 4 October), including formal submission from Irish Environment Minister.
- When responsible Ministers have finished considering the responses they will consider whether further hearings or inquiries are required. If not, final decisions on the revised draft authorisations will be taken as expeditiously as possible.

(If pressed)

- Decision on THORP by the responsible Ministers likely to be made shortly.
- Radioactive discharges at the proposed new limits would result in radiation doses well within national and international dose limits. The European Commission has considered THORP under Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty and has expressed the view that operation of THORP is not liable to result in significant contamination of any other Member state.



### Background

1. The Irish Government are opposed to THORP (and the whole of the Sellafield operation). The Irish Environment Minister sent a formal submission to the Secretary of State for Environment for consideration in the public consultation. If the responsible Ministers decide to allow THORP to operate, the Irish Government is likely to react negatively, but is not likely to take any legal action.

2. British Nuclear Fuels plc (BNFL) completed the construction of its Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) at Sellafield in February 1992. In order to operate the plant, an authorisation for the necessary discharges is required from the regulatory authorities. These are Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. On 4 August the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced that, on the basis of information that had been provided, they were minded to conclude that the authorisations for THORP should be granted. However, this information was to be made available for public consideration and comment during a further consultation period, which ended on 4 October.