2013 session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster II Statement by Ambassador Peter Woolcott
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and Ambassador for Disarmament
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Mr Chairman,

Any State that pursues nuclear weapons increases proliferation pressures within a region, and undermines the global non-proliferation architecture.

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their related technology and knowledge is therefore the responsibility of all States parties – both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But its success depends on States parties' taking practical steps in accordance with their obligations and commitments. The 2010 Action Plan outlines key steps all States parties can take in support of non-proliferation, and we urge all States parties to work together and make every effort to implement the Action Plan, including in furtherance of their own security interests.

Mr Chairman

Australia has been a strong supporter of the International Atomic Energy Agency since its inception in 1957. The IAEA safeguards system provides an invaluable service to the NPT and the international community. It provides a practical means by which non-nuclear-weapon States can demonstrate their commitment to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, while providing assurance that others are doing the same. The assurance the safeguards system delivers is not only essential to preventing nuclear proliferation, but also fundamental to nuclear trade and cooperation and an important factor in continuing progress on nuclear disarmament.

Consistent with Actions 25 and 28, Australia calls on all States yet to conclude a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the IAEA to do so without delay.

Through the ten-nation NPDI, Australia has continued its strong advocacy on the Additional Protocol and modified Small Quantities Protocol. In line with Action 29,

we have conducted outreach to a number of States yet to conclude an AP and stand ready to assist those States to implement an AP if requested.

In support of Action 30, the NPDI has also submitted a joint working paper on promoting the wider application of IAEA safeguards in the nuclear-weapon States.

Mr Chairman

Export controls play a crucial role in implementing nuclear non-proliferation obligations under NPT article III, paragraph 2. Through membership of the NPDI and Vienna Group of Ten, and in support of Action 35, Australia has contributed to two working papers on export controls submitted to this year's PrepCom.

Australia continues to urge all States to establish, develop, review and maintain appropriate effective national export controls over both nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use items and technology. Export control regimes based on the multilaterally negotiated and agreed guidelines and understandings of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Zangger Committee provide the most effective means of fulfilling a State's non-proliferation responsibilities and obligations, while ensuring that the international community can maintain confidence that the trade in nuclear technology and knowledge is exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Mr Chairman

Australia also recognises the need to ensure that relevant export control guidelines keep pace with technological and other developments. As part of these efforts and consistent with Australia's position as a member of the NSG, Australia – recognising the decision taken in September 2008 to grant India an exemption to the full scope safeguards requirement in the NSG's export control guidelines – welcomes India's engagement with the main export control regimes. Compliance with IAEA safeguards is a prerequisite for the supply of Australian uranium to any country and ensures that Australia's uranium supply is only ever used for peaceful purposes. Australia continues to abide by NSG rules and to meet its international obligations as a nuclear supplier in accordance with Action 35.

Mr Chairman

Australia is a long-standing supporter of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ). Such zones play an important role in strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regime by establishing regions in which the manufacture, acquisition, possession, stationing and testing of nuclear weapons is prohibited.

In concert with the NPDI, Australia urges nuclear-weapon States to take all necessary measures to bring into force the pending Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaties Protocols. In an effort to further Actions 7-9 of the Action Plan, the NPDI has submitted a joint working paper on Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Negative Security Assurances (NSAs), stressing the importance non-nuclear-weapon States place on Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and NSAs. While the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, the NPDI paper highlights that non-nuclear weapon States have a legitimate interest in receiving

unequivocal, legally binding security assurances from nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them.

Australia regrets that a conference on the establishment of a Middle-East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone has not yet been convened. We strongly support its earliest possible convening. We fully support the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava of Finland, in his ongoing efforts and look forward to his report to this PrepCom session. It is vital that all States in the region engage in a spirit of genuine and constructive cooperation as they work towards this important goal.

Mr Chairman,

Compliance with IAEA safeguards obligations is imperative to preserve the integrity of the safeguards system and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and related technology. Australia continues to view, with deep concern, Iran's ongoing non-compliance with IAEA Resolutions and the legitimate demands of the UN Security Council. We call on Iran to engage with the IAEA in good faith in the examination of any outstanding or contentious issues to help give the international community assurances of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities. We continue to hope for a successful conclusion of the two distinct sets of negotiations, both with the IAEA and between Iran and the E3+3.

Australia is also deeply troubled by the recent actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We condemned DPRK's third nuclear test on 12 February and its rocket launch on 12 December last year which violated UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874 and (in the case of the 12 February test) 2087. These acts challenge the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and contravene the international norm established by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We are deeply concerned by reports DPRK may be considering testing an intermediate-range ballistic missile and conducting a further nuclear test. Such actions would further escalate tensions and lead to DPRK's increased isolation. We should all recall that the 2010 consensus Action Plan included a call for DPRK's complete and verifiable abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs. So no State Party should be silent on this matter – we should all be speaking with one voice. Australia calls on DPRK to abandon its current path, cease its provocations and abide by its international commitments, including UN Security Council Resolutions.

Mr Chairman

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is in the interests of all States and should be pursued with vigour and determination. As we build to the 2015 RevCon, Australia is determined to see the NPT continue to move forward in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Full implementation of the 2010 Action Plan is central to these efforts.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.