

## **2012 Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

### **Cluster III Debate (Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy)**

#### **Statement by Australia**

Mr Chairman

Australia unequivocally affirms the right of NPT parties to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. Australia takes seriously its obligations in support of Article IV and adheres to the highest international standards for safeguards, security and safety, and encourages other States to do so.

Australia is a major contributor to the development of nuclear energy worldwide, including as a holder of significant uranium reserves, as a party to numerous bilateral agreements on nuclear cooperation, and as a country with a significant scientific base.

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) has been applying nuclear techniques over many years to deliver benefits in areas including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, health care and the environment. The OPAL reactor in Sydney is a significant contributor to the worldwide supply of radiopharmaceuticals using only low enriched uranium, thus avoiding the security and proliferation risks associated with the use of HEU.

Australia is pleased to be among the top dozen contributors to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund, and makes extra-budgetary contributions to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program and Peaceful Uses Initiative. In 2011, Australia contributed funding to the Marine Benchmark Study on the Possible Impact of the Fukushima Radioactive Releases in the Asia Pacific Region, a project being conducted under the Regional Cooperation Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific Region. I am pleased to announce that Australia has recently contributed to the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative to study Ocean Acidification, an important climate change indicator.

Mr Chairman

States Parties should need no reminding that the right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy is a qualified right. This is plain in the Treaty and was again recognized in the agreed 2010 Review Conferences Action Plan. NPT parties that comply fully with the Treaty's non-proliferation and verification requirements under Articles I, II and III have every right to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. But States Parties that violate their non-proliferation and safeguards obligations isolate themselves from the benefits of NPT adherence.

Australia recognises that States with nuclear power programs seek reliable supplies of fuel. However, it is not necessary or desirable for every State with a nuclear power program to develop costly national enrichment or reprocessing programs in order to exercise their rights under Article IV. A well-functioning market provides the best assurance of supply for all States in good standing with their obligations under the NPT and safeguards agreements.

Australia has supported IAEA Board of Governors resolutions establishing multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle. These provide back-up mechanisms which might help avoid the unnecessary spread of sensitive nuclear technologies.

Mr Chairman

Another key factor is States' adherence to internationally accepted standards of nuclear safety and security. The last year has seen a renewed focus on these.

Australia has worked to ensure international actions concentrate on key improvements to nuclear safety, including through: promoting the expanded use of IAEA safety missions; a greater need for independent fact-finding missions following nuclear accidents; and greater transparency of States' adherence to safety standards. We are pleased that the IAEA Nuclear Safety Action Plan reflects these. We look forward to further discussion and action at the August extraordinary meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

In this context, we encourage all States to apply the IAEA's Safety Standards and Codes of Conduct to ensure their national nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety infrastructures are adequate. We especially urge relevant States that have yet to become party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety to do so, particularly those planning nuclear power programs.

The 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit again highlighted the ongoing importance of ensuring the security of nuclear material and addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism. I am pleased to recall that in March this year Australia ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In addition, next year the IAEA will conduct an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission to Australia. We have been at the forefront of developing forensic science to enable the detection of illicit nuclear materials, including through work in the Global Initiative to combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Australia adheres to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (including its 2005 amendment), and implements the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. We encourage States Party that have not done so to take steps to become parties to these security-related conventions and arrangements. All States have an obligation to actively counter nuclear terrorism as required by Security Council Resolution 1540.

Mr Chairman

The Treaty confers a set of interrelated and mutually-reinforcing rights and obligations on States Party. In reaffirming the right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it is important to also recognise the interlinked obligations. Australia will continue to make a significant contribution to cooperation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, in accordance with our NPT commitments, and in conformity with the highest standards of non-proliferation, safety and security.