

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

Cluster II Debate (Non-Proliferation)

Statement by Australia

Mr Chairman

Over forty years since its entry into force, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce their numbers to zero.

There can be no doubt that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. In order to achieve our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, it is important that all NPT states parties work together to implement all agreed outcomes of the 2010 Review Conference.

All NPT states parties have committed to report on their activities to implement the consensus 2010 Review Conference Action Plan, in accordance with Action 20. Australia, for its part, has submitted to this PrepCom a comprehensive, Action-by-Action report of our national implementation efforts. We strongly encourage all NPT states parties to do likewise.

Mr Chairman

Australia's support for a strong non-proliferation and safeguards regime, as envisaged under Articles I, II and III of the NPT, is unwavering.

All States Parties have a common interest in ensuring that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) can effectively carry out its safeguards implementation and verification mandate. The IAEA safeguards system provides a practical means for non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) to access nuclear energy and technologies, while providing assurance that they are doing so for exclusively peaceful purposes. This establishes a vital foundation for nuclear trade and cooperation, while maintaining efforts for nuclear disarmament.

Mr Chairman

States which have taken on NPT commitments must maintain full compliance with those obligations. Not to do so undermines the collective security benefits provided by the Treaty. Australia remains deeply concerned by Iran's continued development of sensitive nuclear technology, in violation of its NPT and IAEA obligations.

We call on all NPT states parties to make a strong, united response to any findings of non-compliance by states with their NPT and IAEA commitments, including by referral to the UN Security Council. We further urge all states parties to fully implement all relevant UNSC resolutions.

It is disappointing that some states parties have not yet fulfilled even the most basic NPT requirement of concluding Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSA) with the IAEA. We urge those states to take steps for the early conclusion of a CSA.

check against delivery

Mr Chairman

A strengthened safeguards system is essential to addressing the problem of undeclared nuclear activities. Australia maintains that a CSA, together with an Additional Protocol (AP), represents the verification standard pursuant to Article III.1 of the Treaty. We urge all states yet to do so to conclude and implement an AP as soon as possible, particularly those states with significant nuclear activities. After all, it has been 15 years since the IAEA adopted the Model AP.

In July 2010, Australia joined with nine other countries to establish the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), dedicated to taking forward the 2010 Review Conference outcomes. NPDI has, as one of its priorities, the promotion of the universal adoption of an AP. The NPDI has submitted a joint working paper on the Additional Protocol to this PrepCom.

Mr Chairman

Effective national controls over the export of nuclear materials and technology – and international coordination in the application of those export controls – are legitimate and necessary for the implementation of states' obligations under Article III of the Treaty and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Strictly enforced export controls, consistent with the major nuclear export control regimes, foster the environment of confidence necessary for nuclear cooperation.

Mr Chairman

Australia strongly supports nuclear weapon-free zones (NWFZ), freely arrived at by regional states, and recognises the important role they play in reinforcing international non-proliferation and disarmament norms and obligations.

Pending the negotiation of multilateral security assurances, such zones also provide a valuable means for NNWS to obtain assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Australia supports the negotiation of NWFZs which are consistent with the 1999 UN Disarmament Commission Guidelines on establishing such zones; which do not erode existing rights under international law to freedom of navigation and overflight; and which make genuine efforts to attract the constructive support of the NWS.

We welcome US President Barack Obama's personal support for United States' ratification of the relevant protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga and the Treaty of Pelindaba. We also congratulate the NWS and ASEAN members for their progress towards signature by the NWS of the protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok.

Mr Chairman

Australia looks forward to working with other delegations to strengthen and advance the NPT's non-proliferation principles at this meeting, and through to the 2015 Review Conference.

Thank you.