

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

General Debate

Statement by Australia - AS DELIVERED

Mr Chairman

Not least because of your nationality, the Australian delegation offers sincere congratulations on your appointment as Chair of this first session of this PrepCom. You may be assured of our full support in your efforts to make this meeting a success and to start the new review cycle positively and constructively..

Over forty years since it entered into force, the NPT remains the cornerstone of international efforts to check the spread of nuclear weapons, to achieve real reductions in nuclear arsenals globally, and ultimately to realise the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Australia welcomed the substantive consensus outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is therefore vitally important that all NPT States Parties (including nuclear-weapon States) work to comprehensively implement the 2010 Action Plan. In accordance with Action 20, Australia has submitted to this PrepCom a national report on our efforts to implement the Action Plan and through it, the NPT itself. We strongly encourage all NPT States Parties to do likewise.

Mr Chairman

Australia is proud to have joined with nine other countries – Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates – to establish the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

The NPDI has submitted a number of working papers to the PrepCom, reflecting our current priorities.

Action 21 encouraged the nuclear-weapon States to agree on a standard nuclear disarmament reporting form. Last year, the NPDI developed a draft standard disarmament reporting form, as a contribution to their discussions towards meeting this objective. We have circulated this draft reporting as part of an NPDI working paper to this PrepCom.

The NPDI has also submitted NPT PrepCom working papers on the universalisation of the IAEA Additional Protocol and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament education.

We believe that the best way to ensure full compliance by states of their NPT safeguards obligations is through their adoption of an Additional Protocol to their IAEA safeguards agreements. Effective safeguards uphold the right of countries to access nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, by closing the door on the proliferation risks associated with the spread of nuclear technology.

Australia is honoured to chair in Vienna a small group of NPT States Parties that work together to support review of the Treaty. The 'Vienna Group of 10', as it is known, has submitted a suite of papers on 'Vienna issues' for consideration by this PrepCom. We trust that these will assist States Parties in their deliberations.

Mr Chairman

Australia is deeply disappointed by the on-going failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to adopt a program of work, including in particular the commencement of negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), which is a longstanding goal of NPT States Parties. Australia urges all members of the CD to make all efforts to overcome its now 15 year-old impasse.

NPDI members have submitted a working paper to this PrepCom which, *inter alia*, announces a series of scientific experts' meetings, convened by NPDI members this year, to feed into the CD's consideration of FMCT issues.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would be a major step forward for disarmament, particularly in conjunction with an irreversible, verifiable FMCT. Australia urges all States that have yet to do so to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay.

Australia congratulates Indonesia on its ratification of the CTBT in February this year. Indonesia's leadership sets an example for the eight remaining Annex 2 states required to ratify for the CTBT to enter into force.

Mr Chairman

Australia is a long-standing supporter of nuclear weapon free zones, freely arrived at by regional states.

Australia therefore welcomed the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference regarding the Middle East and urges all relevant states to continue to work constructively towards the convening of a conference this year on the establishment a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Australia upholds the rights of states to access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, within a framework that reduces the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and adheres to the highest standards for nuclear safety and security.

Mr Chairman

On 13 April, the world witnessed the DPRK's attempted rocket launch, in defiance of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. North Korea's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery represents one of the most serious challenges to international peace and security today.

Australia is also profoundly concerned about the failure of an NPT State Party, Iran, to abide by relevant UNSC resolutions and its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards obligations. We hope that the discussions currently under way

between Iran and the so-called “P5 Plus 1” countries can produce an outcome that will meet the legitimate aspirations of Iran and satisfy the global cause of non-proliferation.

Without doubt, the nuclear proliferation challenges we face today are difficult. However, we also have a unique opportunity now to strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime for the decades ahead. It is therefore timely for all NPT States Parties to pursue practical initiatives to uphold the principles the NPT and the global peace and security it helps create.

