



AUSTRALIA

May 2017 NPT Preparatory Committee: General Debate Statement

Mr Chairman

As we embark on this first PrepCom of a new NPT review cycle, we should be realistic – but not unduly pessimistic. Your comprehensive and constructive outreach across regions has confirmed the centrality and enduring relevance of the NPT to global peace and security.

In the current more multipolar, fluid and challenging geopolitical environment, the stability and near universality provided by the NPT is increasingly important.

Australia maintains its strong and long-standing commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons, an objective shared by all NPT States Parties. We share the concern of many that some 15,000 nuclear warheads still exist.

Mr Chairman

A notable challenge facing the NPT is the DPRK's repeated breaches of relevant international obligations. As NPT States Parties, we must collectively condemn the DPRK's nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs and urge the DPRK to cease its nuclear and missile programs, and to avoid further destabilising or provocative actions.

On a positive note, the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran is testament to the determination of the broader international community to ensure NPT commitments are respected and upheld. UNGA resolutions establishing useful dedicated groups on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty and nuclear disarmament verification are also important steps forward. And there has been good progress on the nuclear security agenda.

We must not lose sight of the substantial and continuing benefits flowing from the NPT. Across its three pillars, it is among the most successful and significant of multilateral treaties.

But we do urge continued progress by all States Parties in fulfilling their Article VI commitments.

Mr Chairman

The NPT has been remarkably successful in relation to non-proliferation. It has curtailed the number of countries with nuclear weapons, and strengthened the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons.

The IAEA Additional Protocol provides one striking example of the evolution over time of the NPT's non-proliferation effectiveness. Australia calls on all states that have not yet done so to conclude an Additional Protocol without delay.

The NPT has enabled many countries to enjoy the peaceful uses of nuclear energy – while proliferation risks are managed. This has brought important developmental, welfare and economic benefits in areas including human health, agriculture and food security, water and the environment. Australia remains a strong supporter of the IAEA's work in spreading to all states the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology.

But important work remains to be done across the three pillars.

On disarmament, we must prioritise essential concrete steps such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and further progress towards a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. Another such step is the development of robust techniques for verifying nuclear disarmament and the dismantling of nuclear weapons. We should also seek to make progress on increasing transparency by improving arrangements for reporting by NPT nuclear weapon states on details of their nuclear arsenals.

We must continue to ensure that safeguards regimes remain strong and adequately resourced, as these underpin our non-proliferation efforts. National export controls also make a crucial contribution towards the NPT's non-proliferation objectives. Australia therefore encourages all NPT parties to adhere to the export control guidelines of the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

We must also look for practical ways to build confidence and make progress on the Middle East WMD Free Zone issue, which has proved so challenging at our past meetings.

And we must continue to collaborate on a range of initiatives to ensure that non-nuclear weapon states continue to reap the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr Chairman

Australia believes the only realistic path to achieving tangible nuclear disarmament outcomes is to work with common purpose among all NPT states parties to progress Article VI commitments in an inclusive way, not through processes that will heighten divisions. Our path must include addressing the security concerns that lead states to develop and maintain nuclear weapons; engage the countries with nuclear arsenals to persuade them to eliminate those arsenals; and undertake the practical steps we all agreed upon in the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Unity across our diversity is possible. Australia is proud to be part of two broad cross-regional group of countries that have worked unceasingly to promote and strengthen

the NPT across its three pillars: the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Vienna Group of 10, including a strong advocacy of the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Only practical and credible steps such as these will make a real difference in our journey to a world where nuclear technology is used for peaceful purposes only.

Thank you Mr Chairman.